Famous Artists Course

Famous Artists Schools, Inc., Westport, Connecticut

Advanced line drawing and tonal painting

Lesson 15

Albert Dorne

Fred Ludekens

Norman Rockwell

Al Parker

Ben Stahl

Stevan Dohanos

Jon Whitcomb

Robert Fawcett

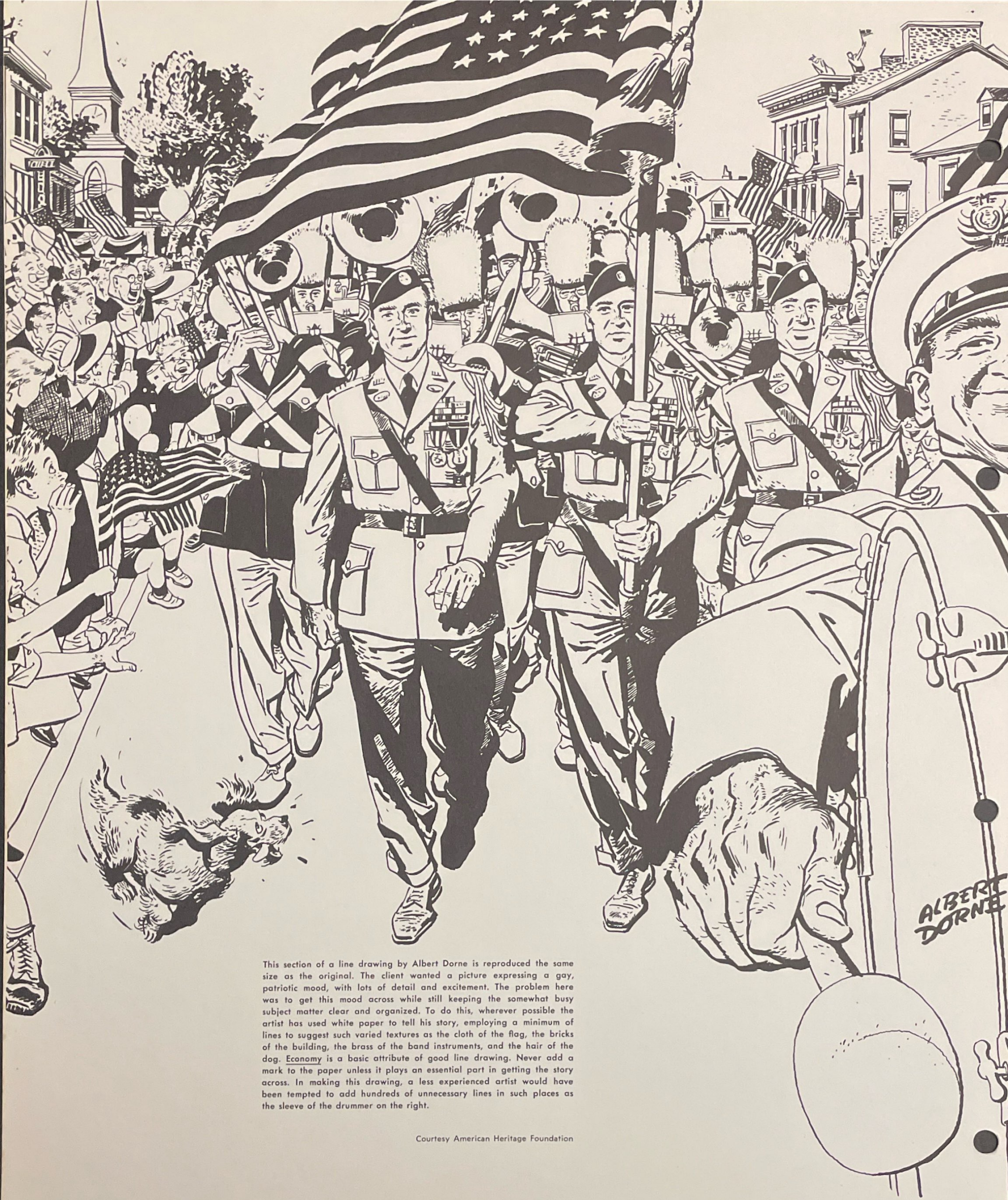
Peter Helck

George Giusti

Austin Briggs

Harold Von Schmidt

COPYRIGHT © 1960, FAMOUS ARTISTS SCHOOLS, Inc.
Printed in U.S.A.



This section of a line drawing by Albert Dorne is reproduced the same size as the original. The client wanted a picture expressing a gay, patriotic mood, with lots of detail and excitement. The problem here was to get this mood across while still keeping the somewhat busy subject matter clear and organized. To do this, wherever possible the artist has used white paper to tell his story, employing a minimum of lines to suggest such varied textures as the cloth of the flag, the bricks of the building, the brass of the band instruments, and the hair of the dog. Economy is a basic attribute of good line drawing. Never add a mark to the paper unless it plays an essential part in getting the story across. In making this drawing, a less experienced artist would have been tempted to add hundreds of unnecessary lines in such places as the sleeve of the drummer on the right.

Courtesy American Heritage Foundation

The drawing shown on the opposite page is reproduced above at the size it appeared in newspaper advertising. It has been reduced to almost one-third the size of the original. In spite of this fact, all of the fine lines have held up without breaking. The tones created by cross-hatching are clean because the artist was careful to preserve enough white space between the lines to prevent them from filling in with printing ink. It is essential to keep restrictions like this in mind while doing the original drawing, because a commercial picture is judged not by the original but by the reproduction.

Advanced line drawing

The first pictures in the history of art — exciting, vigorous pictures of animals, made by the cave dwellers of the Stone Age — were line drawings. Today, many thousands of years later, line drawing still continues to be a very basic and popular technique of picture making. You cannot pick up a current magazine, newspaper, catalogue, or brochure or look at advertising billboards and television commercials without being impressed by the tremendous number of line drawings being used. Most of today's top artists got their start by specializing in this medium — and so, doubtless, will most of tomorrow's.

There is good reason for the widespread popularity of the line drawing. It is the least expensive picture to reproduce, and has the added advantage of printing well on almost any type of paper. Usually it is reproduced by means of a line plate.

Because line drawing is always in such great demand, you will find it well worth your while to develop your ability with this indispensable medium. Probably more than any other technique of picture making, line requires a good control of values, and directness and sureness of drawing. Because changes and corrections are not easily made, it is not a medium to be approached with timidity. It will help you greatly if, before you put pen or brush to paper, you have a clear picture in mind of what you want to do. Careful planning and compositional sketches in which you pin down your value pattern and drawing details are invaluable aids for making good line drawings.

Line drawing offers you a wonderful opportunity to interpret your subject in a highly expressive and personal manner. With tonal mediums like transparent wash and opaque you can duplicate the values of your subject tone for tone. When you draw in line, however, you must translate these values into the terms of the line medium. You suggest and interpret values by strokes that are thicker or thinner and closer or further apart. You must also simplify the number of values. With too many close values, your picture will tend to get lost in a multitude of lines that create an over-all gray tone. Always keep your pattern of values simple. It is a misuse of the medium to attempt to create all the intermediate grays of a tonal painting in a line drawing.

The language of line is rich and varied. With your brush or pen you not only suggest the lightness or darkness of the object you draw — you describe its contours, how it feels to the touch, and other characteristics as well. Line can represent softness or hardness — the stoniness of granite, the yielding quality of cloth or flesh, the coarseness of bark. A heavy line may render the shadow side of a form, a thin line the light-struck side. Notice how effects like these are created in the many pictures in ink in this lesson. There is, of course, no substitute for experimenting with different pens and brushes to develop your versatility in rendering these effects — but you can also find out many useful things for yourself through the attentive study of the work of outstanding line artists.

In this lesson we shall place considerable emphasis on the problems of drawing for reproduction and point out how you can make every line count. We shall also demonstrate which pens, brushes, and other tools you should use for various purposes. You will be introduced to more line mediums and drawing surfaces and be shown how you can achieve fascinating textural effects with them. We shall explain all of these and many other intriguing aspects of line drawing to you — because you cannot know too much about this very basic, popular, and rewarding technique of picture making.

Representing form in line drawings

Your line drawings will never be any better than the solid form, design, and composition you give them. A good line illustration is composed of 90 per cent thought and drawing — and only 10 per cent ink!

Although line drawings are the easiest to reproduce, they are the hardest to draw well! This simple statement may not impress you and, as you become immersed in exploring the fascinating and almost endless possibilities of line, as explained in this lesson, you are more and more likely to forget it. There will be a strong temptation to spend your time developing tricky line techniques for the sheer pleasure of putting lines on paper, while forgetting more basic things. For this reason we are going to emphasize these more basic things here and now.

Line is the most sophisticated of all methods of drawing. Perhaps you have not realized it, but there are no lines around the forms we see. There are tones or values in nature, and colors and edges. But there are no outlines! When the artist draws an outline to establish a form, he is using an arbitrary symbol which other artists have developed for the purpose of expression over centuries of artistic experiment. Because line is an artificial convention, it must be handled with skill and understanding if it is to be effective.

A single line may be used for three different purposes. First, it "contains" the subject, establishing the contours within which the subject is understood to exist. Second, it can be used in relation to thicker and thinner lines to create the illusion of three-dimensional form and to suggest texture. Third, it may be used with other lines to create a compositional pattern and to contribute life and movement to that pattern. Often, in the most subtle line drawings, a single line may be used to do all these things at once. It contains the form, it models the form, and it creates movement in a compositional pattern.

When you realize that a single line may be entrusted with so much responsibility, it is easy to understand that finding precisely the right line is a job that requires thought and practice. The more simple and economical the drawing, the more precise your thinking must be.

Not all line drawings are simple. The line reproduction method is also used to print a variety of drawings which are not so much pure line drawings as they are tonal drawings rendered in line. Such pictures, by ingenious exploitation of crosshatching and other line effects, may almost suggest a tonal drawing of the subject while still retaining the feeling of line.

Whether your drawing is to be done with the most economical means — a single line — or is to employ thousands of lines to tell its story, one fact is obvious: The drawing must have in back of it your full understanding of the three-dimensional form you are depicting. The minute you lose the sure sense of solid form in your drawing, you run the danger of having nothing left but meaningless lines on paper. No matter how cleverly these lines may be applied from the standpoint of line technique, in the end you will find that technique is not enough. Always remember that you are depicting form in line, and technique will follow almost automatically out of the subject itself.

Here is the figure as you see it when drawing from model or photograph. It provides you with authentic, detailed information about the form and position of the subject — but, like all the material you work from, it should not be copied in precise detail. Rearrange and interpret as necessary, to express your idea better.

Your first step will be to "think through" and "draw through" the figure, reducing it to its solid, basic forms. Make any changes now which will improve the design while making the action clearer and more positive. Notice how the figure has been given added grace by moving the hands away from the body.

The forms of the clothing must be designed and drawn just as carefully as the forms of the figure itself. Apply all the information you have learned about drawing clothing and its various folds. Remember that the folds of the clothing must always be designed rather than copied from the photograph or model.

Every good line drawing should reflect clearly the preliminary thinking and drawing shown in the preceding sketches. The following pages will show you many interesting line techniques. However, your line drawing will be a failure unless it is based on solid, well-constructed, and carefully proportioned forms.

Construction drawing: The first thing to understand and draw is the form of the head. In this preliminary sketch the head is drawn as a solid egg form. Ellipses locate the eyebrows, nose, and mouth. Notice that the hat fits around the head — and even the tubular folds of the scarf are drawn as three-dimensional forms. This stage is basic, whether the drawing is in tone or line.

Tonal drawing: To understand the basic differences between tone and line, let's compare their characteristics. Here's a detailed and realistic tonal painting of the subject. Done in opaque, it is painted with a series of tones ranging from white through light, middle, and dark gray to black. The edges are blended softly together with a No. 3 sable brush.

Drawings by Michael Mitchell

Line drawing: Here is a line drawing of the same subject. Only one tone (solid black) is used on the white paper. However, the effect of gray tones can be created. These tones are made by controlling the width of the lines and the amount of space between them. This drawing was made with a Gillott pen No. 290 and a sable brush No. 3.

Think it out before you begin

Unlike many other mediums, line drawings offer very few possibilities for correction. Every time you place a black mark upon your white drawing paper, that mark is there to stay. Corrections can be made — but with difficulty. Therefore line drawings demand that you have a clear understanding of what you intend to do and have every problem thoroughly worked out before you begin the finished drawing.

The first step, of course, is to decide on your subject and make numerous thumbnail sketches until you have the composition established. Choose the best of these small trial sketches and make a more finished drawing to work out the feeling, rhythm, and design in a general way. At this point you should be thinking in large masses, with strong contrasts between the shadow areas and the highlights.

Before you can go any further, you must understand the basic form of your subject matter thoroughly. The best way to be sure of form is to make simple construction drawings of the type shown above on the left. You have been taught this constantly throughout the Course, and if you have been conscientious you have made studies of this kind for every drawing since then. We cannot overemphasize this point: There is no substitute for clear understanding and control of three-dimensional form in its most simple aspects!

Once you are certain that you have the basic form under control, you can proceed to make a careful pencil drawing on tracing paper. This drawing should include even parts of objects which will be hidden by other objects in the finished drawing. Your finished line drawing will be more convincing if the objects are "drawn through," solid, and correctly proportioned in this sketch.

Only after this extensive preliminary thinking and organization will you be ready to approach the rendering of the finished drawing in black and white. Now you must make a further decision: Do you plan to render this drawing in pure, simple line, leaving out as many details as possible, or can you express your subject best through a more detailed rendering, using different kinds of lines to suggest intermediate shades between black and white as in the line drawing above? Is your drawing to be in a high key or in a low key? Will you attempt to be completely realistic, or do you plan to produce a decorative or even distorted drawing? Any of these approaches, and many more, are possible. But you must decide clearly in advance which approach you plan to take, and what tools you will use.

The drawings on the following pages will show you a very wide variety of approaches and techniques. What we want you to understand now is the fact that none of these techniques will help you create a successful drawing unless, by means of preliminary planning and sketching, you have arrived at a clear picture of what you want to see on the paper when the drawing is finished. We want you to experiment with drawing techniques, of course. But such experimentation should take place before you begin your finished line drawing. This is one medium where you can't "play it by ear." You have to know what you're doing from start to finish!

Choosing your approach

Every drawn line should

count as an expressive force showing

the true contours of the form.

BEN STAHL

The drawings on this spread and the page following demonstrate some of the many different approaches you can take to a specific subject. Those shown in Figures 1 to 5 are realistic, and range from the full tonal rendering in Figure 1 to the most economical and restrained expression in Figure 5. On the other hand, the drawings in Figures 6 to 10 are stylized, but the tonal handling is essentially the same as in the drawings directly above them. On page 8 you will find a further group of drawings. These are all modeled as solid forms, but each one has been executed in an unusual and distinctive line technique.

We show you these three sets of drawings to demonstrate the following points: First, the same basic, solid form underlies every one of these drawings, no matter how stylized or exaggerated the treatment may be in some respects. Second, the artist decided, before he began each sketch, exactly what kind of drawing he intended to make — whether realistic or stylized, and to what degree. Third, he settled in advance such questions as the over-all lightness or darkness of the drawing, the tools he would use, the general direction of lines in specific areas, and the style. As a result the drawings have consistency and quality.

It is not enough to begin a sketch with the simple idea "I am going to make a line drawing." Every important problem should be worked out in experimental drawings before you take up pen, pencil, or brush to make the finished picture. Your ideas may change as the final drawing progresses, but it is important to have complete control of the drawing at every stage. This is true whether you are drawing a single figure or a parade. You must think through and work through your drawing before you start, making preliminary studies and deciding what you want to say and how to say it.

1 This drawing, although personal in treatment, is essentially a realistic tonal rendering in full light and shade. The artist has created a detailed, three-dimensional picture of this character, paying full respect to rounded contours, natural or local values, and textural differences. He used three tools — Gillott pens No. 290 and No. 170, plus a No. 2 sable brush to put the thicker blacks in the hat and to strengthen heavy accents throughout.

2 The realistic intent is the same in this drawing as in Figure 1. But on the whole the drawing is much lighter. Local values have been dropped, although the artist has respected the stronger value changes and the more obvious textural differences. Fewer and thinner lines create a lighter effect. Gillott pen No. 290 was used for most of the drawing. However, the stiffer nib No. 170 was used for stronger accents.

6 The drawings in this group, Figures 6 to 10, are stylized and whimsical rather than realistic, but again the underlying structure has provided a basis for sound variation. This drawing plays up a fine balance of black areas against white. The sketch was done with sable brushes — No. 2 and No. 3.

7 In making this drawing the artist has used groups of lines, each group having a strong personality of its own and depicting a particular texture. Local values have been preserved, and strong lines serve to join tonal areas of different value. Gillott pens No. 170 and No. 303 were used.

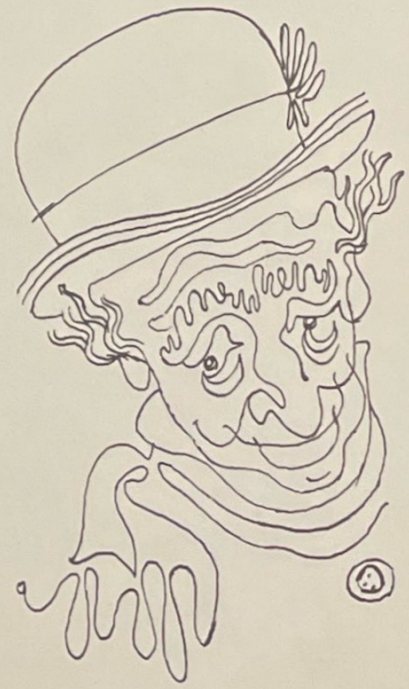
3 Now the white paper has become almost as important as the line. The heavy accents serve to point up the main features. Coarser lines are used to bring out differences of texture. Gillott pen No. 290, used for this drawing, is a flexible nib which makes it easy to vary the width of the line.

4 This drawing is still realistic. But now there are no accents, and the forms are simply outlined. However, in spite of the complete absence of values, the form is still convincing because every line was correctly placed on the basic construction head which underlies the drawing. Gillott pen No. 290 was used in making this drawing.

5 With these few even-weight lines the artist has presented his subject in the simplest terms possible. And yet, because each line helps to show three-dimensional form, there is no question about what you see. Only a thorough knowledge of your subject will enable you to make your drawing convincing with such economy of means. This picture was made with a Gillott No. 290 pen.

8 This caricature-style brush drawing depends for its effect on a more or less continuous heavy line of varying weight. The entire drawing is restricted to this one kind of line, except for the few very fine lines employed to suggest roundness of form. The brush used was a No. 3 sable.

9 This sketch is a study in the use of angular and somewhat bizarre lines to obtain a weather-beaten effect. The artist used a rather rigid nib — Gillott No. 170. The broken lines, deliberately ragged in places, add interest. They are made by jerky back-and-forth pen strokes.



10 The exaggeration of the bulbous nose and craggy eyebrows gives this one the quality of a caricature. The treatment is light and rhythmical, in keeping with the intended spirit of the sketch. Continuous, even-weight lines like these require sensitive control. Gillott pen No. 290 was used.

Drawings by Michael Mitchell

Same subject – same tonal effect – but different techniques

A sound and exhaustive knowledge of line technique is basic to your career as an artist. You can never know enough about the possibilities of the black and white mediums, and it will pay you to experiment extensively. Make numerous drawings of the various types illustrated on these pages, and invent as many new effects as you can.

Those who are still beginners are tempted to believe that the secret of unusual and effective drawings must lie in the tools with which they were created. Unfortunately, the answer is not that easy. An accomplished and imaginative artist can create the most intriguing effects with the simplest tools. Although you should have a thorough acquaintance with every specialized technique, you will probably be making the best investment of your time if you learn to exploit to the full the possibilities of a few simple instruments. With enough practice and experience, you can handle one tool (for example, a Gillott No. 290 pen) with such versatility that you can duplicate the effects in drawings done with several other pens or combinations of pens and brushes.

1 This drawing illustrates Ross board technique. Ross board, a special drawing paper, has a fine pebbled grain. When a black crayon is dragged across it the top of the grain becomes black but the spaces between stay white. If the crayon is pressed harder against the board, the white spaces fill up and a solid black line results. In this case the artist used an extra-hard lithographic crayon. He brushed in the solid, smooth lines of the hat and scarf with a No. 3 sable and ink.

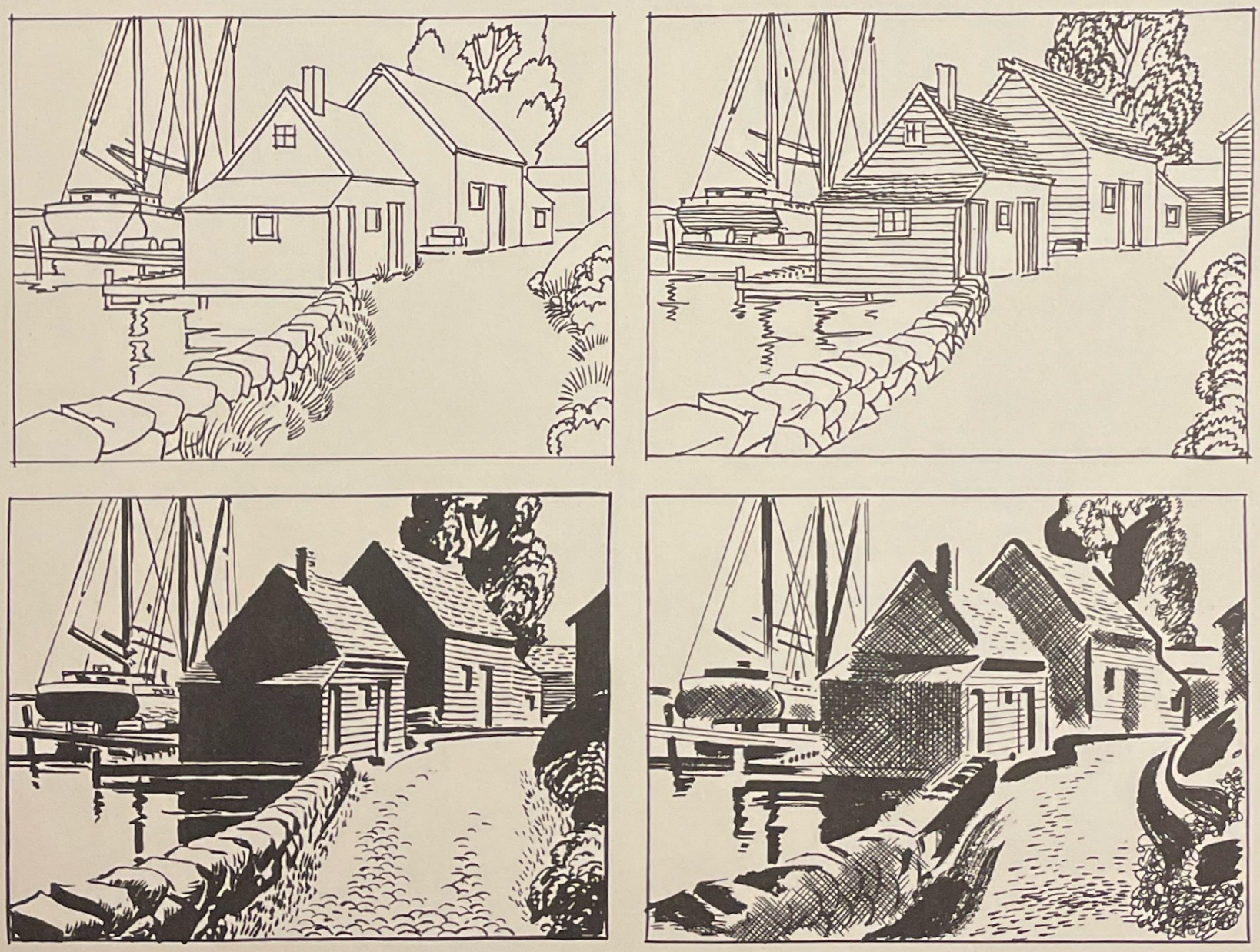
2 The dry-brush drawing shown above was done with lampblack on coarse water-color paper, using sable brushes No. 3 and No. 5. The solid areas were painted in with a fairly wet brush, pressed firmly against the paper. For the shaded areas drier lampblack was used, and the brush was tested on another piece of the same paper. Then the comparatively dry brush was merely dragged across the drawing lightly so that only the raised tooth of the paper caught the black pigment.

3 This stipple drawing was done with a rigid pen nib — Gillott No. 303. The point was pressed against the paper lightly for the smaller dots, and worked more heavily for the larger dots and the lines. A No. 3 sable brush was used for the heavier lines of the hat brim, the feathers stuck in the ribbon, and the fringe of the scarf.

4 Special scratchboard paper was used as the basis for this drawing. A solid ink background was brushed over the whole area with a No. 5 chisel-edged sable. After chalk had been rubbed over the back of the preliminary pencil sketch, done on tissue paper, the drawing was traced down on the scratchboard with a very hard pencil. A needle-pointed tool was used to scratch out the fine lines, and a square-pointed tool to gouge out the broader ones. A straightedge helped keep the lines in the background roughly parallel.

5 Crosshatch is one of the oldest and most effective techniques for creating tone. The secret lies in very careful control and a knowledge of the exact number and character of lines needed to create tone of a given value. A flexible, fine nib was used in making this drawing — Gillott pen No. 290. Where a wider line was desired the nib was spread apart by pressing harder on it.

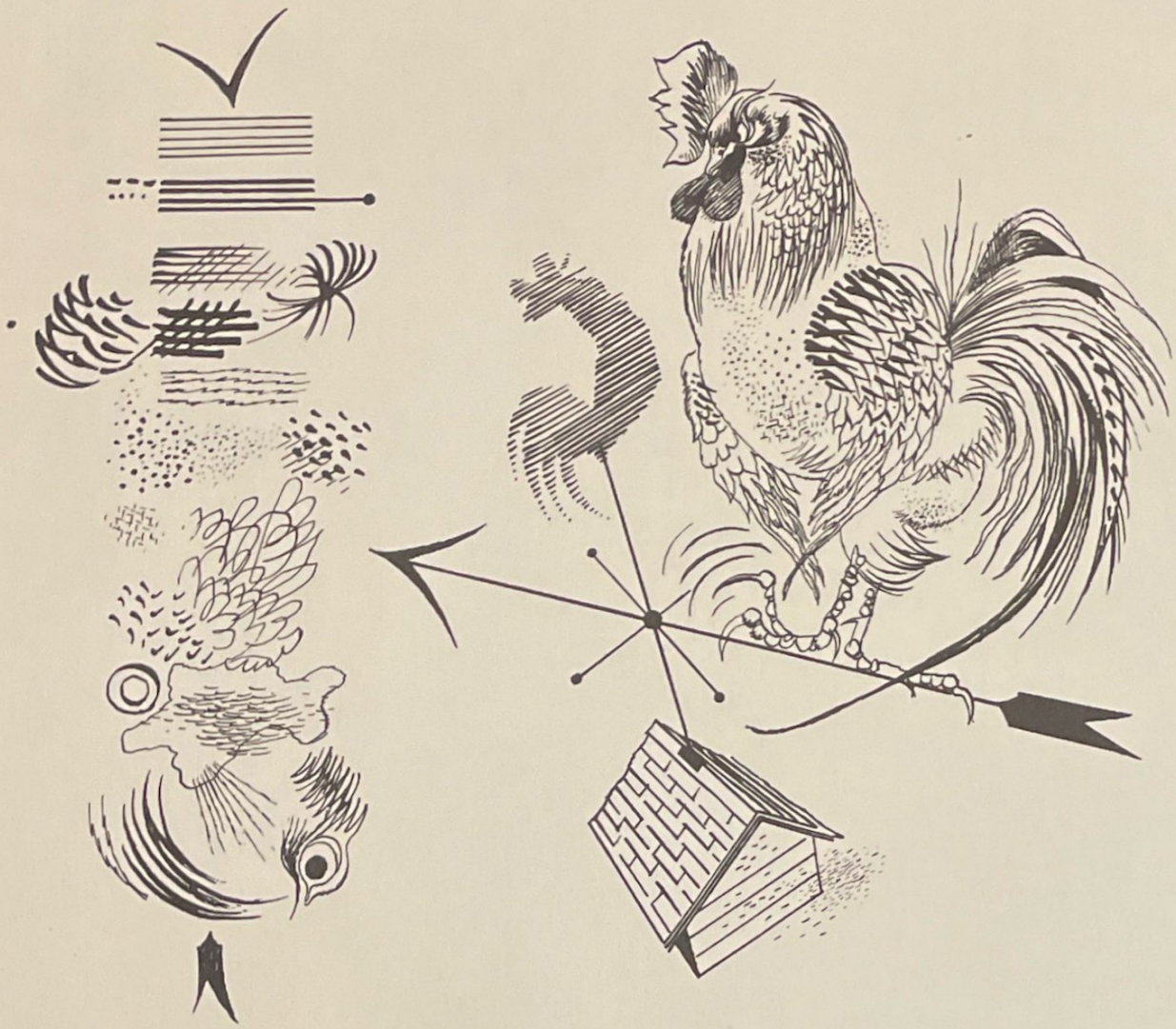
The same principles which apply to the construction of a single head apply also to a figure or a group of figures. The drawings above are rendered in a variety of different values, techniques and textures. But in every case the basic form is the same. Although the first drawing is extremely simple and economical, warmth and informality have been achieved by the use of broken lines. The second drawing is slightly more realistic. The third drawing is rendered with careful regard for texture, utilizing a full range of values. The fourth drawing is a study in strong contrasts of solid black areas against white.



When individual forms are put together to form a composition, as in the scene above, the same approach to form and value still applies. These four drawings show a variety of renderings, from a simple outline to a rather stylized handling. All, however, are convincingly and solidly drawn.

Lesson **15** Famous Artists Course

Advanced line drawing and tonal painting



The fine lines in this drawing, such as those in the wing tips and feet, were done slowly and carefully with a flexible, fine point.

In contrast with the fine lines, the sharply tapered lines in the wing and the heavy lines in the comb were drawn rapidly with a more rigid, coarser point.

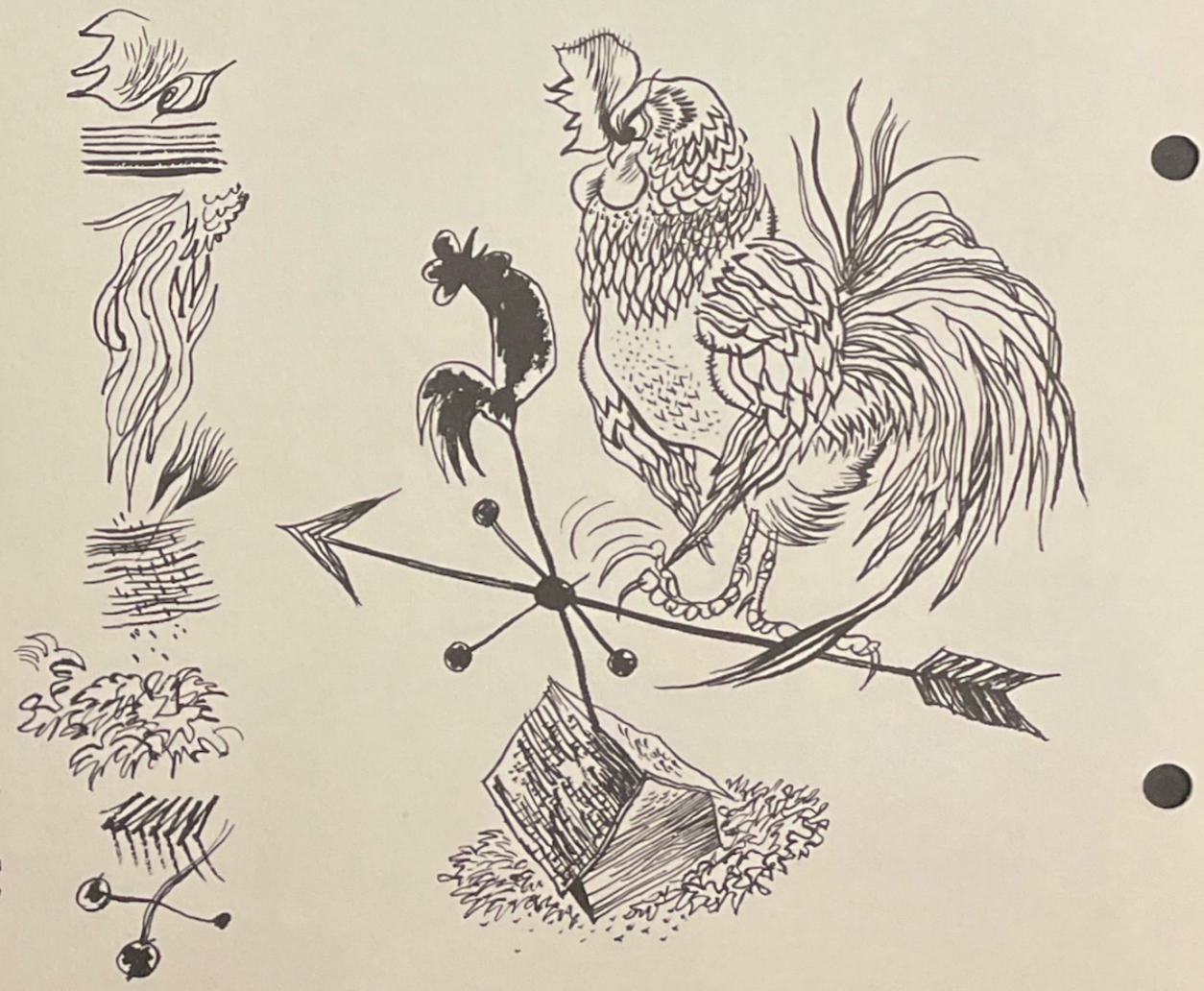
A Speedball C-5 pen was used to make the crisp, straight lines in the weather vane.

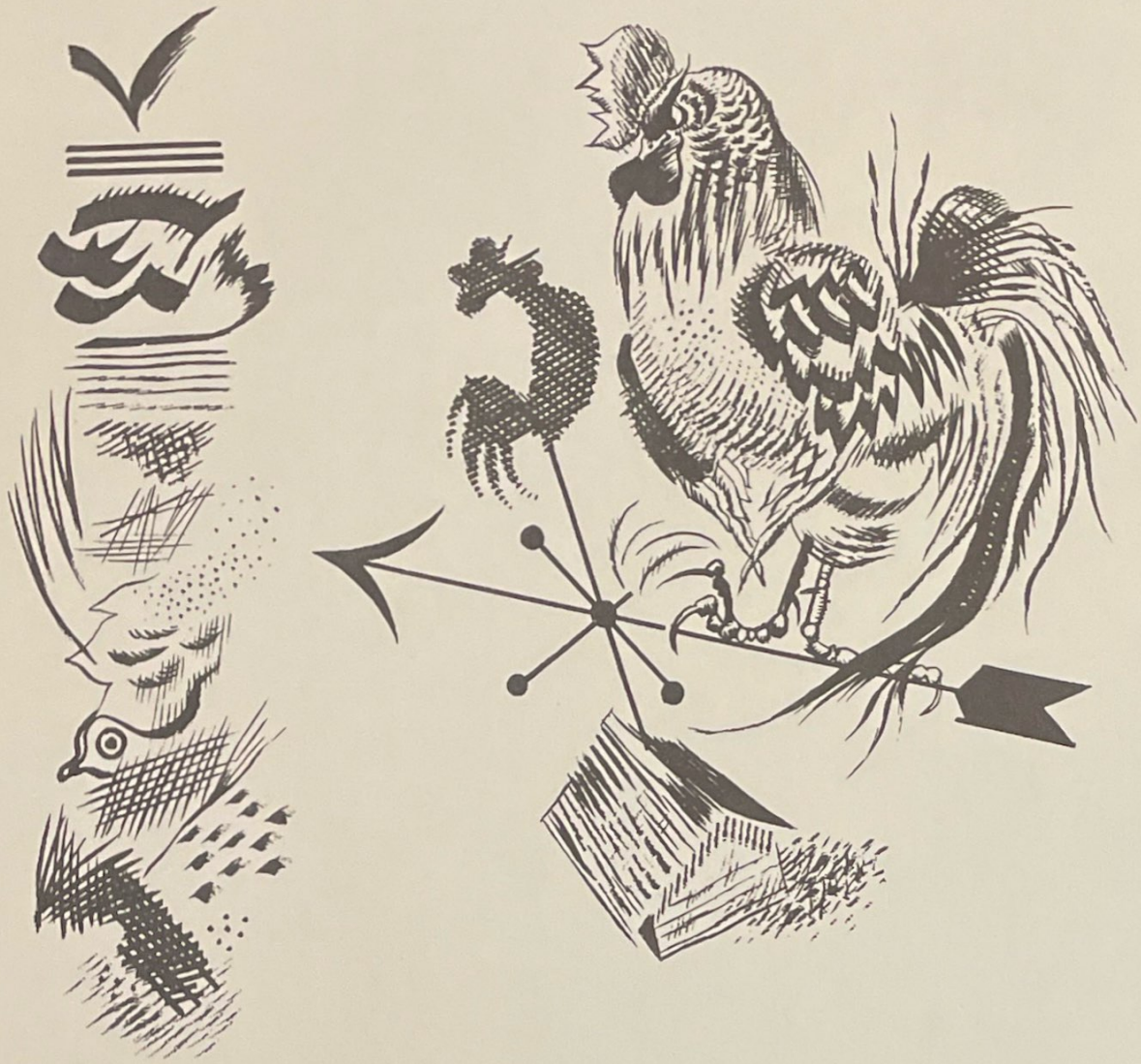
Selecting the right tool

When you have carefully considered the effect you want to create in a line drawing, you should select the drawing instrument that will produce exactly the result you want. In this section you will become acquainted with some of the most useful tools and the line effects they will create. By patient experimentation, you will be able to invent many useful effects.

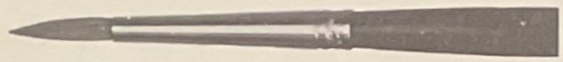
It is worth your while to explore these different line mediums. You can never tell which technique will be most useful for your particular needs until you are thoroughly acquainted with each one of them. Knowing precisely what effects are at your command will be helpful in planning your drawings from their earliest stages. For example, if you know that a certain tool will make decorative lines of a particular nature, you will be able to plan a decorative drawing with that tool in mind.

This drawing was done entirely with a No. 3 pointed sable brush. All the lines were drawn slowly and carefully.





A No. 5 chisel-edged sable brush was used for the broad lines in the wing and the tail.



A No. 3 pointed sable brush was employed for stipple, crosshatch and the finer lines.

A Speedball C-2 was used for the firm, rigid lines in the weather vane.

This is a "dry-brush" drawing, made on coarse-grained paper with pointed sable brushes (No. 3 and No. 5). In this case lampblack was used. The brush was filled and then brushed out to required dryness on a piece of scrap paper. All the lines were drawn rapidly. The weather vane was ruled in with a wet brush.

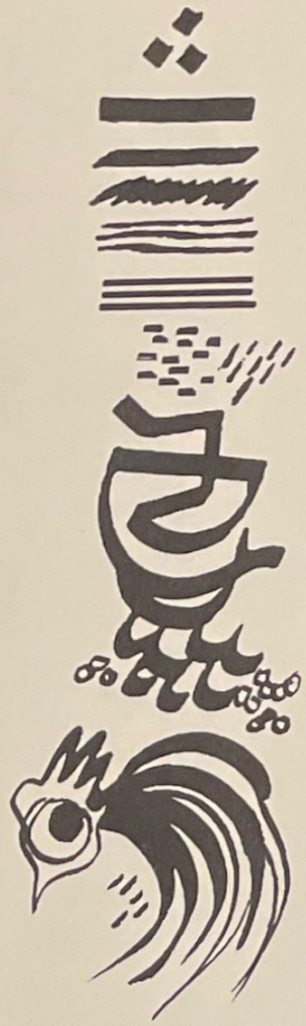
Pointed sable brush No. 3

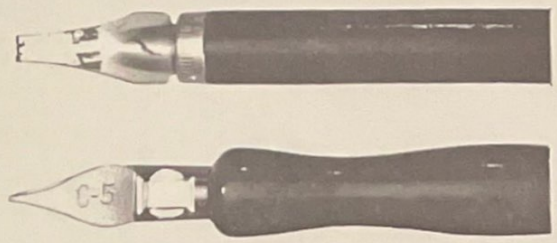
Pointed sable brush No. 5

Drawings by Michael Mitchell

Lesson **15** Famous Artists Course

Advanced line drawing and tonal painting





A broad lettering pen and a Speedball C-5 were used to render this drawing. These broad, coarse pens force the artist to handle the design with great simplicity, producing a highly stylized drawing.

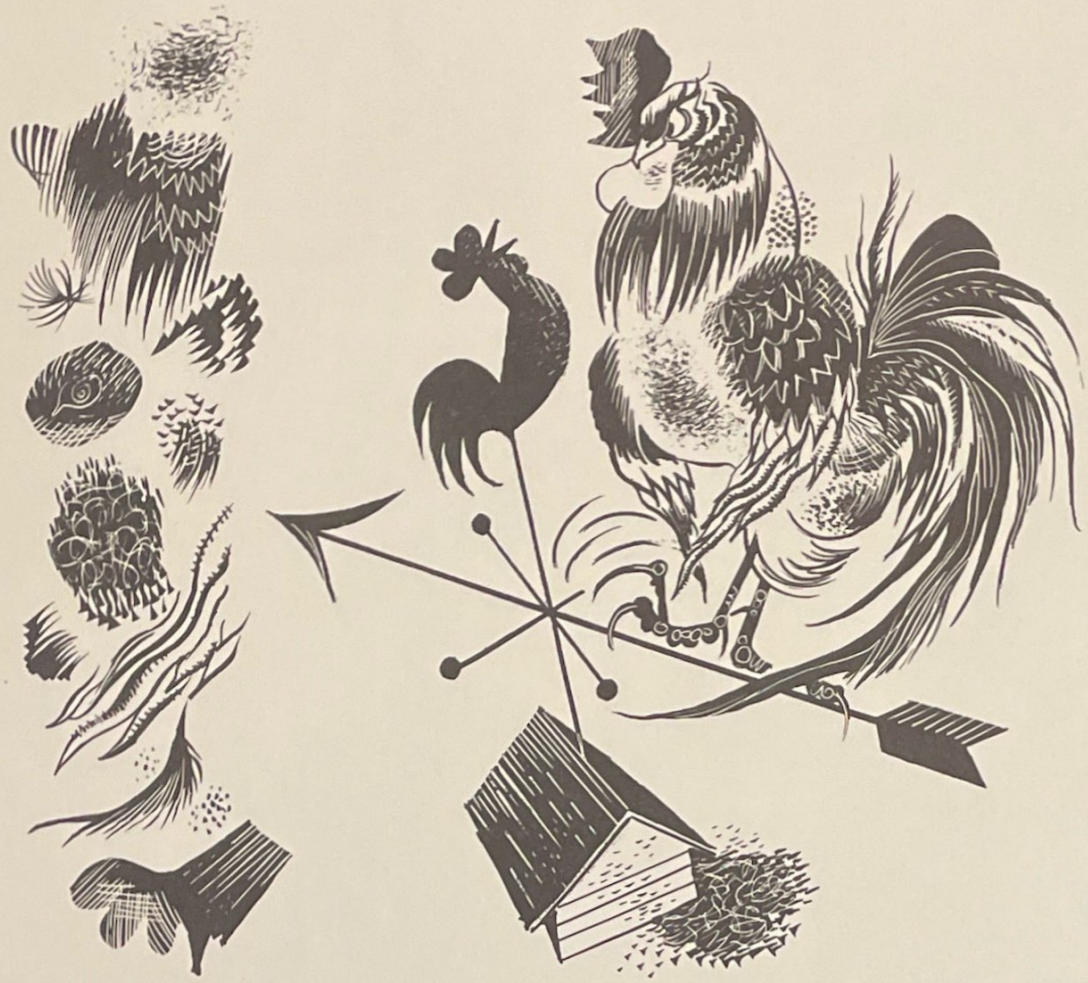
The drawing at the right was made on Ross board. The artist used a wax lithographic crayon and two pointed sable brushes (No. 1 and No. 3). The raised tooth of the paper caught the crayon, leaving minute spots of white in the depressions and thus automatically creating a kind of pebbled effect.

The main dark areas, the graded tones, and the dark tail were done with the crayon.

Pointed sable brush No. 1

Pointed sable brush No. 3

A ruled brush line formed the main part of the weather vane, and the legs were also done in brush.



This scratchboard drawing stresses a pattern of blacks against a white background. Methods of working in scratchboard are explained in detail on the following pages.

The black areas were painted with a No. 4 pointed sable brush.

A round brush was used for stippled effects.

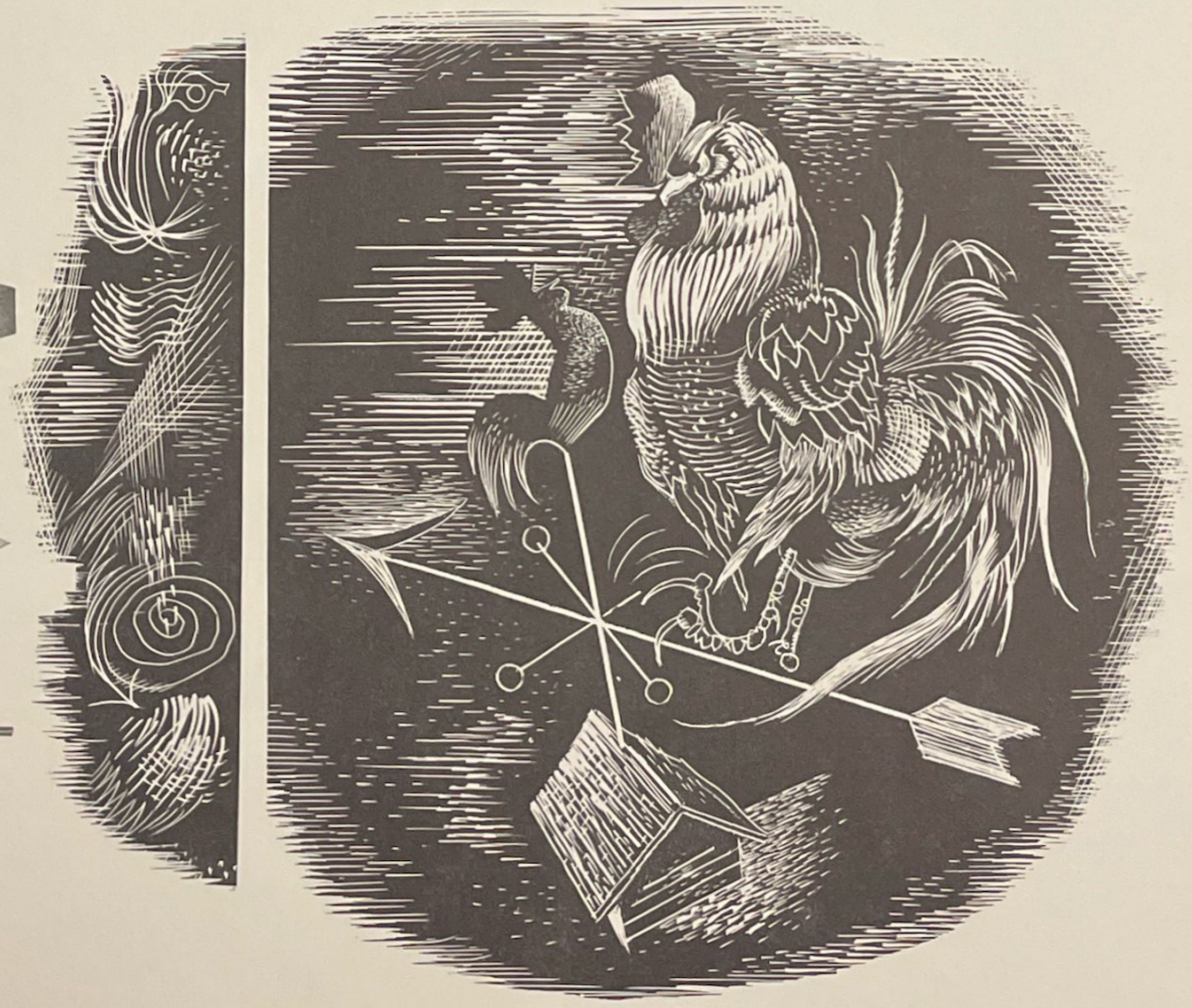
Square scratchboard tool used for scratching white lines into black areas.

This scratchboard drawing stresses a pattern of whites against a black background.

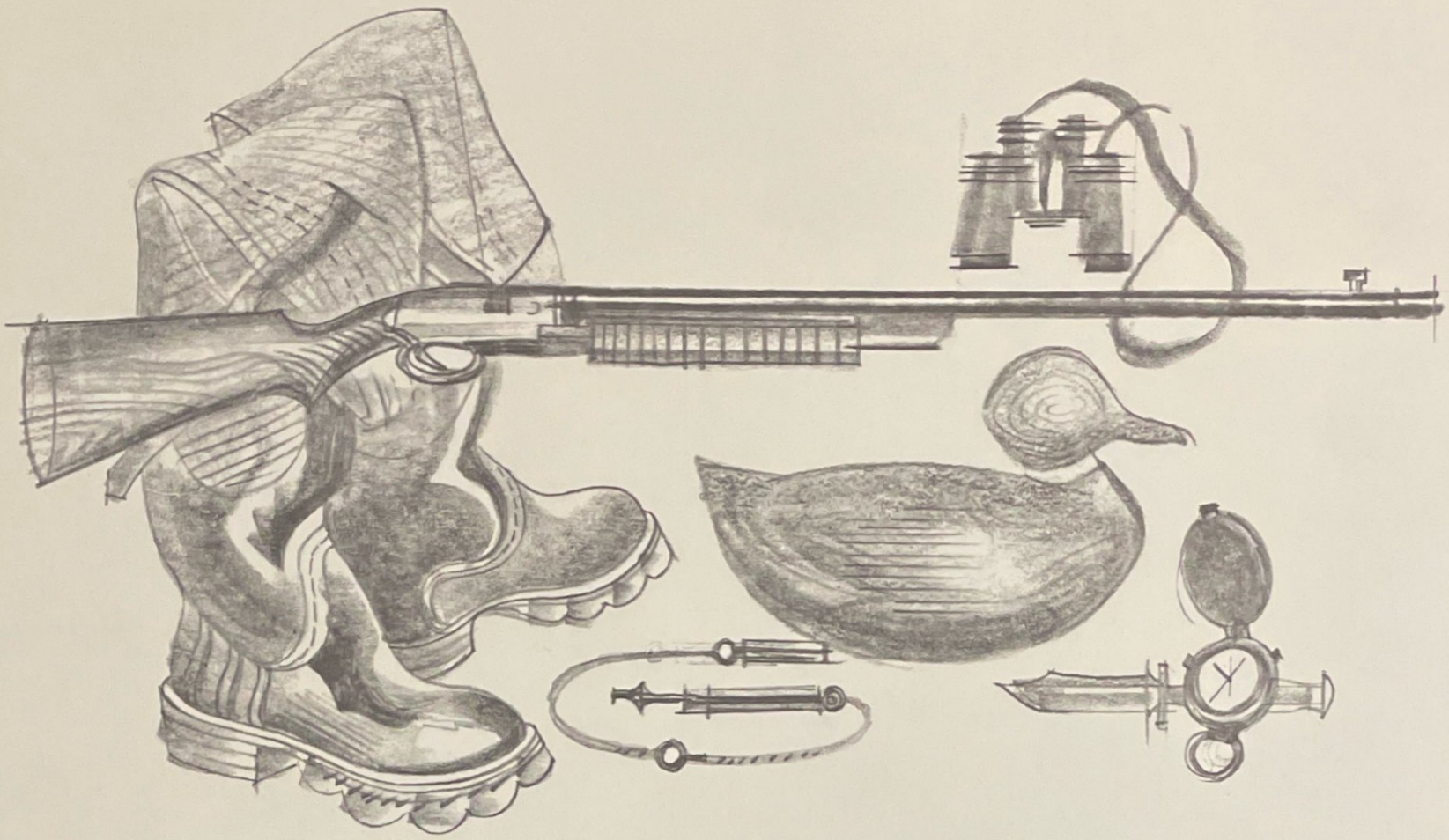
The black background was brushed in with a No. 10 chisel-edged sable.

Finer crosshatch lines were done with a pointed tool.

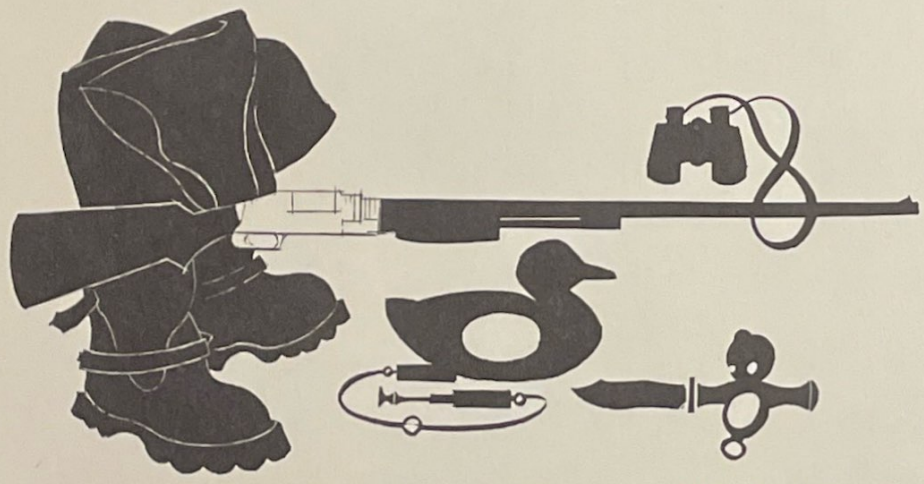
Horizontal lines were ruled in with a square scratchboard tool.



Drawings by Michael Mitchell



This is a preliminary pencil drawing for the finished scratchboard rendering on the opposite page. Since the final drawing in this case is to have a white background, the sketch was made with black pencil on white tracing paper. On the other hand, if your picture is to appear as a white drawing against a background of black — as in the drawing of the rooster at the bottom of page 13 — prepare the preliminary drawing with a white pencil on black paper.



To transfer the pencil drawing to the scratchboard surface, you can make a special transfer tissue by coating the back of a separate piece of tracing paper with either pencil or white chalk. If you are making a typical scratchboard drawing — white against black — you will first coat the scratchboard with India ink and use the white chalk transfer sheet. If your final scratchboard drawing is to have an over-all pattern of dark against a light background, you will use the pencil transfer sheet. The pencil lines on the white scratchboard will then guide you when you ink in the black lines of the finished drawing.

Here we have used a combination of transfer techniques. The outlines of the objects were traced down on the white scratchboard with a pencil tissue. Next, these shapes were inked in with solid black, except for the areas of the breech action, the side of the duck, and the compass face, which were left white. To establish the main white guide lines inside the black area of the shapes, the artist then traced these lines down on the black by using a chalk transfer tissue.

Scratchboard techniques

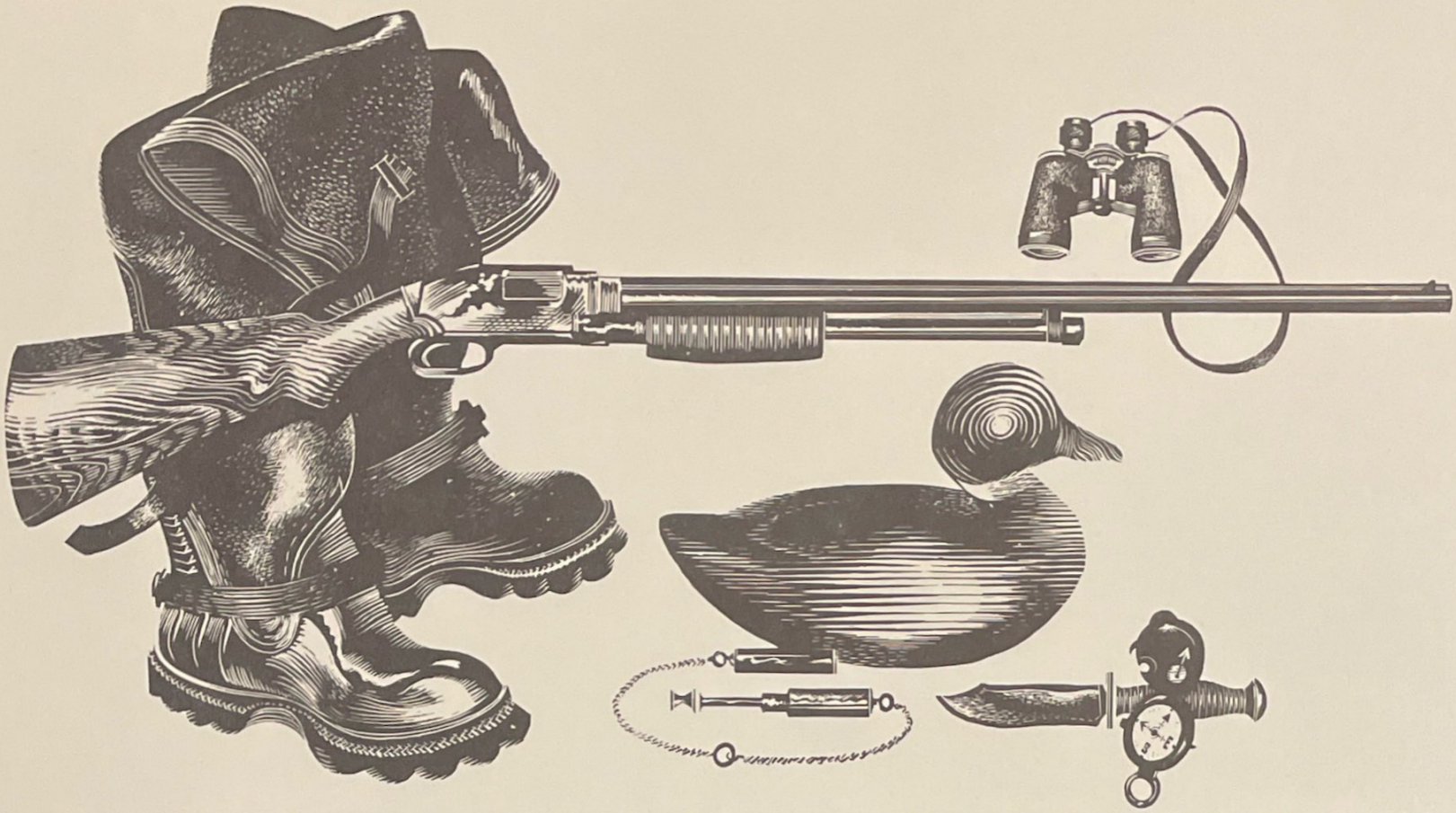
One of the most useful special techniques in the field of line drawing is scratchboard. It has many advantages: It reproduces very well — even when greatly reduced, and printed on coarse paper. You need only the simplest drawing equipment. You can draw extremely fine black or white lines very easily. The crisp quality of scratchboard makes it an ideal medium for pictures in which accurate detail and precise drawing are essential. Today's scratchboard is in many respects the equivalent of the old woodcut and the later hand-done steel engraving.

By contrast with the earlier engraving methods, scratchboard has the advantage of being extremely easy to handle once you understand it. The drawing is made on a special piece of illustration board which has been coated with a fine white clay. This board, like the technique itself, is called "scratchboard."

There are three ways to handle scratchboard, as illustrated in detail on the opposite page. If you wish your picture to have the effect of a white drawing on a black background, you will begin by brushing black India ink on the coated surface of the board. When the ink has dried you can scratch the lines of your drawing into it, revealing the white clay. This is the normal scratchboard method.

On the other hand, if your drawing is to appear black against a white background, like a regular ink drawing, you will sketch with a sable brush and India ink on the scratchboard and later scratch out details in some of the black areas.

A third method combines both techniques. Refer to the illustrations on the opposite page to see how this is done. (Other scratchboard drawings appear on page 13 of this lesson.)



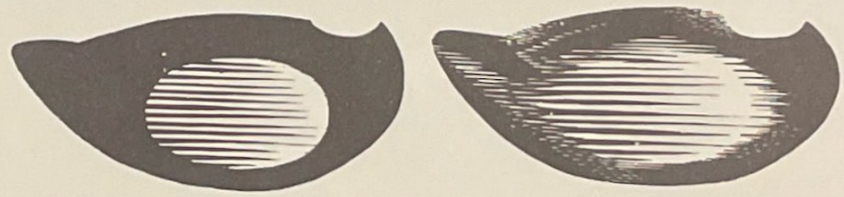
Here is the finished scratchboard drawing. The textures are convincing because the artist has used lines which are appropriate to each form. Study and analyze the length, width, interval, and direction of these lines. Notice the extreme contrast between the long, straight ruled lines on the gun barrel and the short, flecked lines on the top of the boot. Curved lines of varying width and character were scratched out to simulate the polished grain of the gunstock. On the other hand, the straight, tapering lines on the side of the wooden decoy were inked in. These techniques are explained in detail below.

Drawings by Michael Mitchell

Three ways to work in scratchboard

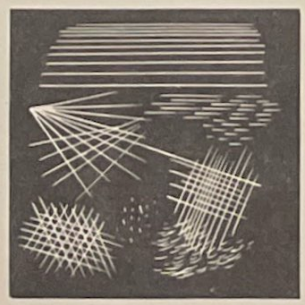
White lines on black: The duck's head was first filled in solidly with black India ink. The white lines were then scratched out. This is the basic technique of scratchboard.

Black lines on white: This part of the gun (the breech action) was drawn directly on the white scratchboard with a sable brush. This technique is exactly like the one for making a typical line drawing. A few details in the larger black areas were then scratched out.



Both techniques combined: The duck's body was inked in with solid black, except for an oval area of white in the middle. Then the horizontal black lines were drawn across the white oval area with India ink and a small brush. The drawing was completed by extending the resulting white lines into the black areas with a scratchboard tool, and flecking out the smaller lines to suggest the wooden texture.

Three basic scratchboard tools



The scratchboard tool on the right is an Esterbrook scratch knife, No. 331. The kinds of lines it makes are illustrated above. This tool was used to draw the fine lines in the gun barrel, boots, knife handle, and binoculars.

This tool is an Esterbrook scratch knife, No. 330. It was used to draw the broad, tapering lines on the gunstock. It is also helpful in scooping out large areas of ink. By turning the tool from side to side, you can create the effects above.

This is a scratchboard tool with a square cross section. Used at its full width, it will make lines the size of the widest ones in the panel above. Turned on its corner, it will make fine lines. By rolling the holder between your fingers as you draw, you can vary the width of your lines. The large scratchboard drawing above was done with these three tools, plus a No. 1 and a No. 3 sable brush.

How I make an illustration in line– Frederick

To me the underlying "black pattern" – the structural basis of the drawing in frank, strong accents of pure black – is probably the most compelling and distinctive feature of a good line drawing. But black and white are at opposite ends of the value scale. The eye seeks intermediate values of gray to help it bridge this gap. Therefore I feel that the use of intermediate values in combination with the black pattern is almost equally important.

If the basic structure and design of the black pattern are right, it is a comparatively simple matter to relate intermediate values to this framework. These gray in-between values are obtained by interpreting in texture the forms and surfaces. Sometimes a few dots or a line or two will suffice to suggest a surface and give "color" to an area, or dimension to a form. At other times a more finished interpretation may be advisable. These areas of tone may be either larger or smaller than the pure black or white areas. The extent to which you will wish to introduce texture with intermediate values will depend to a large extent on the subject and design.

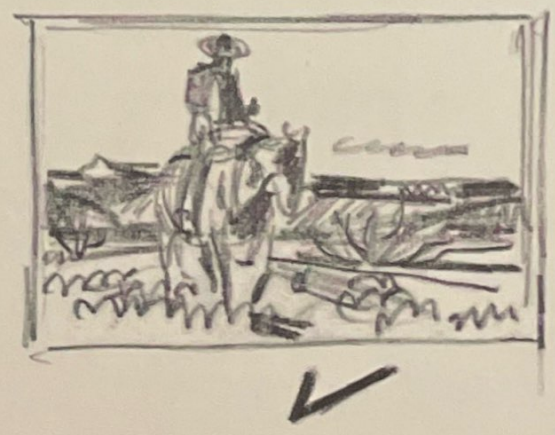
To illustrate these points, I will discuss in detail my method of producing a picture drawn in line.

The Subject: I am using as an example a drawing which will occupy about half a page in the *Saturday Evening Post*. The story to be illustrated is part of a serial. The action takes place in the high country of New Mexico about 1885. A wagon train has been burned by a group of Indians. A wounded girl is found, bleeding but alive. She is carried out of a flat valley by a rider on horseback. The text to be illustrated reads: " . . . she could distinguish certain sounds, a horse's slow hoofbeat, the creak of saddle leather. Her body felt cramped and she was aware of her shoulders being tightly held."

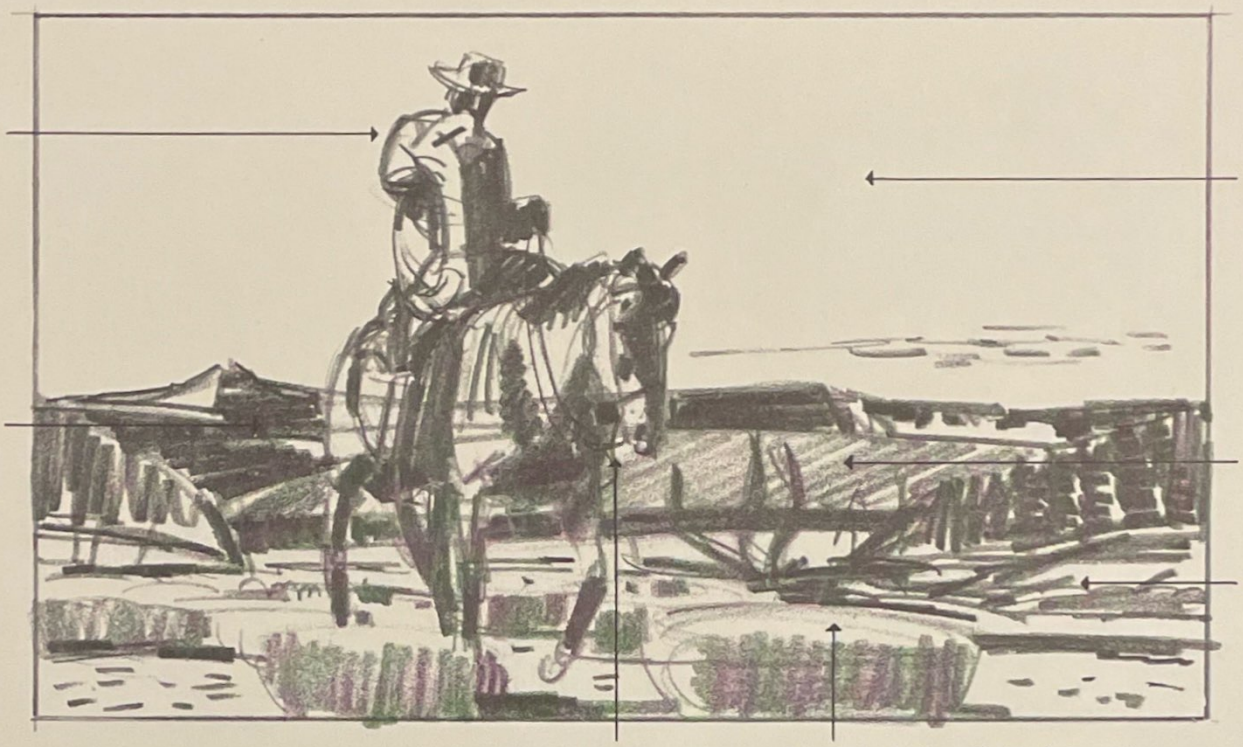
A strong design is the key. The blacks hold the structure and are used in large areas to give force to the illustration. There are three things I want to get into my line drawing: (1) The character and mood of the subject. (2) Variety in the arrangement of black, white and grays. (3) A picture pattern with strength, clarity and simplicity.

The start

These five sketches are reproduced actual size. I make as many as necessary to get what I want. Working in a small area, I can concentrate on essentials and not be concerned with details. At this point I am interested only in feeling and action and in composing areas of solid black, grays, and white in the design.



1 **Now I begin to develop the most satisfactory of the small sketches, working on tracing paper at the actual size of the final reproduction (10½" by 6¼"). My concern is with the character, action, and rhythm of the drawing as a whole. I try not to lose the feeling of the original sketch in moving to the larger size. Right at the start I establish the main light and dark masses.**



The rider is placed well off center — I don't want to "freeze" him at dead center.

More than half of the sky is on this side — and the background shapes are more interesting — because I have placed the horse and the rider well to the left.

The dark shadows on the mountain next to the light horse will help to make the animal stand out.

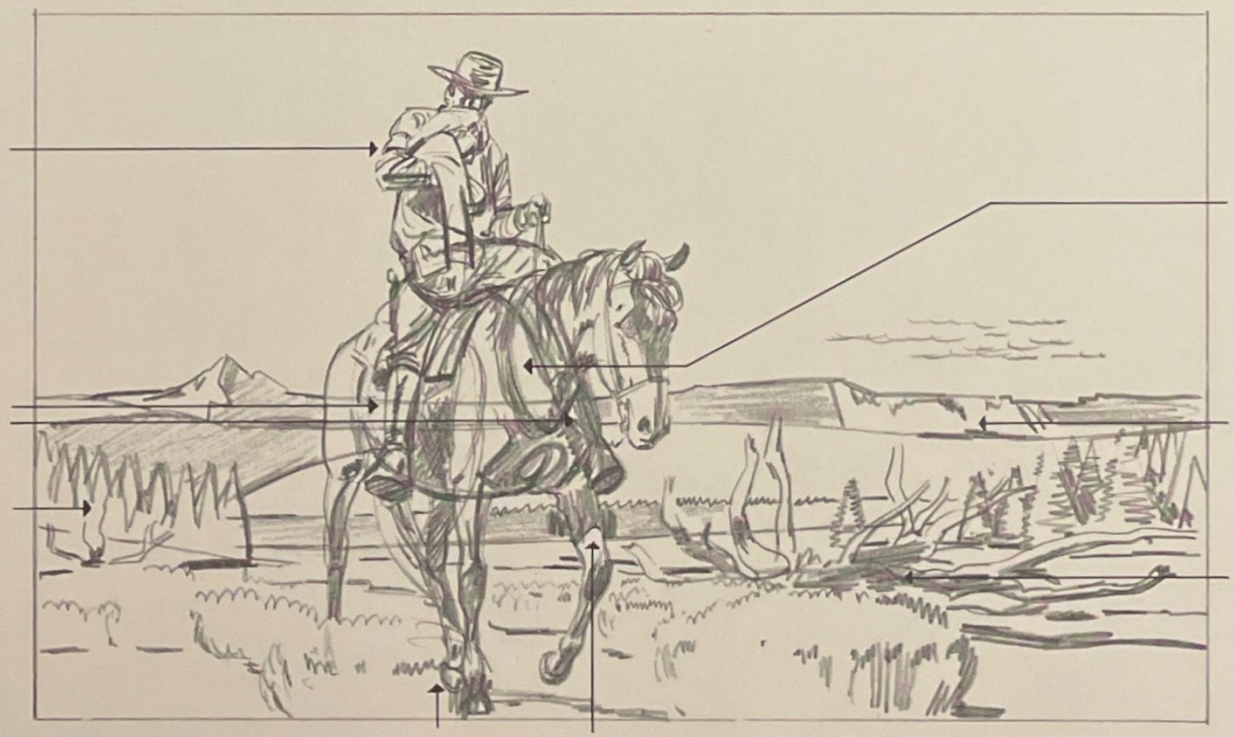
The wooded mountain must be kept fairly dark so as not to break up the mass of the background landscape.

The twisted lines of the dead piñon tree contrast with the smoother, flowing lines above and below it.

The dark shadow on the horse makes it stand out against the timbered gray mountain.

Sagebrush shrubs will be light and rounded in shape, smaller as they recede, overlapping each other.

2 **The final pencil drawing is made the same size as the previous sketch. Here I want a carefully worked-out drawing of all the forms, properly constructed and proportioned.**



So that the action will be unmistakable, I make the man's arm come forward and clearly go under the woman's arm.

The base of the neck, the body, and the legs of the horse are "drawn through."

The man's legs are far enough apart to allow for the solid form of the horse's body in between.

I felt the need of more light area in this row of hills for balance and interest. This area may or may not be retained in the finished drawing, depending on how the more important shapes work out in later stages.

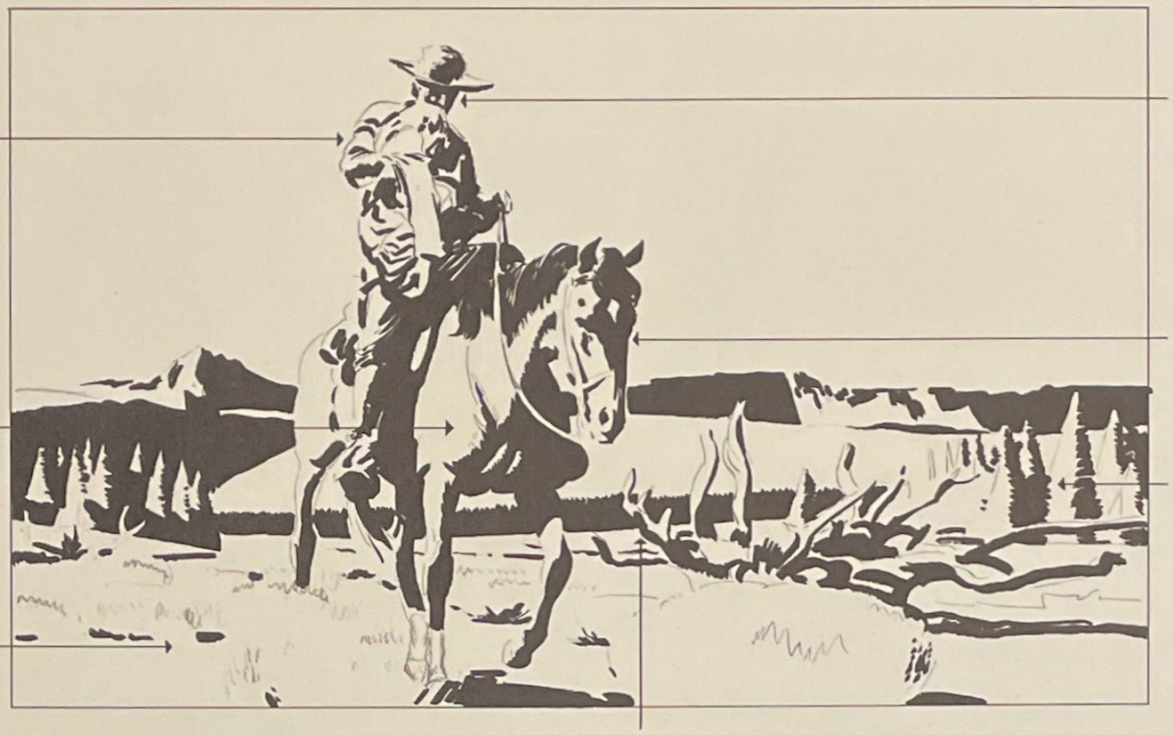
The cone-shaped trees are only suggested at this stage. When I place the blacks these will be drawn with a brush.

The shadows and the lower, outstretched limbs of this stump will be directional — they will extend from behind the horse's left front leg to the right-hand border of the picture. This adds motion and direction.

For sound construction I draw both hoofs of the horse, although they will be hidden in the final picture.

This light spot is very important to help thrust the leg forward. It must overlap the lower line of the background trees.

3 **My next step is to trace the drawing down lightly on hot-pressed Whatman board. To make the picture easier to work on, I enlarge it to one and one-half times reproduction size—15¾ by 9½ inches. With the camera lucida this can be done rapidly. I then paint in all the large black areas with a brush, using "extra-dense" black ink. These solid blacks quickly establish the basic pattern for the whole picture.**



All of the folds are suggested; I will work them out more carefully later.

The solid mass of the horse's body carries no detail. It is made up of the white of the paper.

With the brush I establish a few small black areas, taking care to vary their size and shape for interest. The intervals are varied, too.

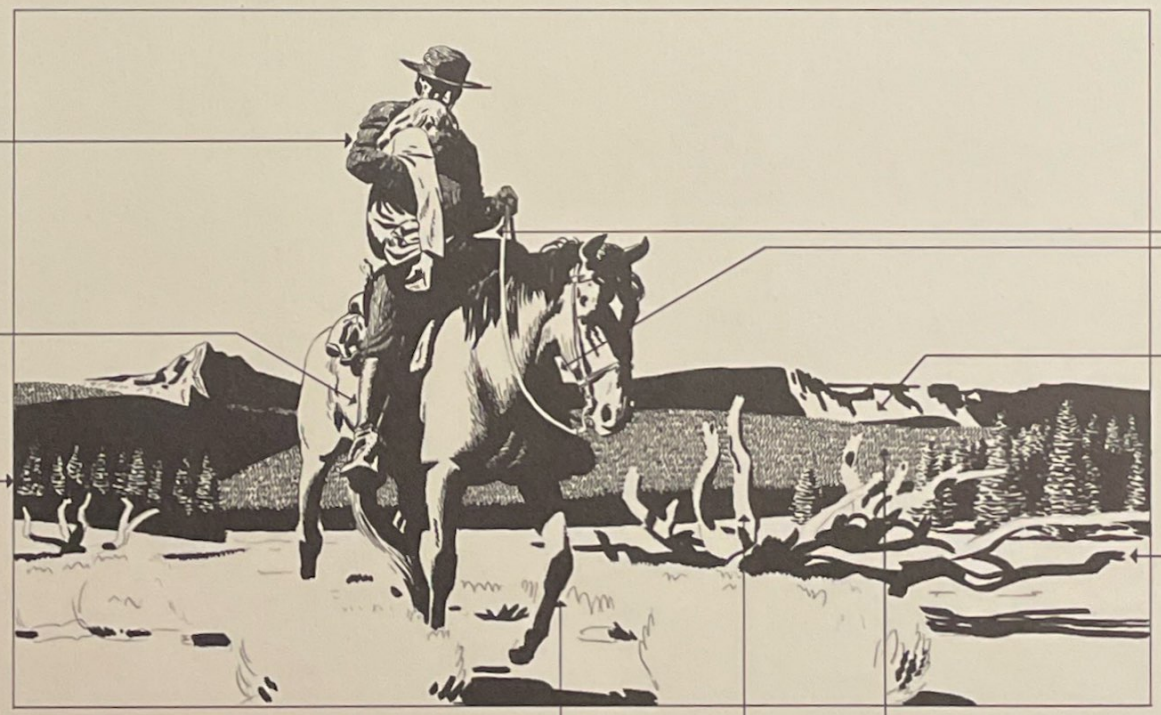
The rider should appear as a strong dark shape to stand out against the sky and contrast with the light form of the girl.

The horse's head is modeled in solid black, which strengthens the sense of three-dimensional form.

I want a strong, simple pattern of light and dark to establish the basic cone forms. Thus the solid form will not be destroyed later when I add details.

Black shadows along the side of the dead tree help separate it from the hill in the background and keep it clearly in the front of the picture.

4 **Using a medium pen and regular India ink, I render the texture of the background pines with up-and-down strokes. Next I move to the larger trees, then to the darker textures on the figure and some of the horse.**



This texture is loose and different from that of the background trees. I have made it quite dark to give strength to the rider's figure and bring out the white head and garment of the girl.

The boot is given a slightly irregular edge to suggest the glint of light reflected on the leather.

I darkened these trees to keep them in the middle distance and relate them to the wooded hills far in the background.

These two white background areas help make clear the form of the figure and also the head of the horse.

The white area of the cliffs takes on different "color" after the wooded hills are rendered. Compare this sketch with the one above.

The black shadow of the broken stump carries through from this point to beyond the horse's leg. This dark pattern gives contour and solidity to the ground. Notice that the form is repeated in a smaller pattern on the left side of the picture.

This dark area on the lower leg, contrasting with the light of the upper leg, helps produce the impression that the leg is actually bending.

The smooth, sun-baked texture of the dead boughs takes on a new tone when seen against the background pines. Compare it with the previous stage above.

The tone of the pines is rendered with up-and-down zigzag strokes. This mass holds all the background together and forms a rich and unusual textural pattern.

5 I complete the rendering of detail in the last stage. As I put in the textures, I make sure they follow the forms and express their character. Notice how much of the picture is white paper with little or no drawing on it.

The dark area at the base of the sagebrush has been intensified to create better balance in the composition.

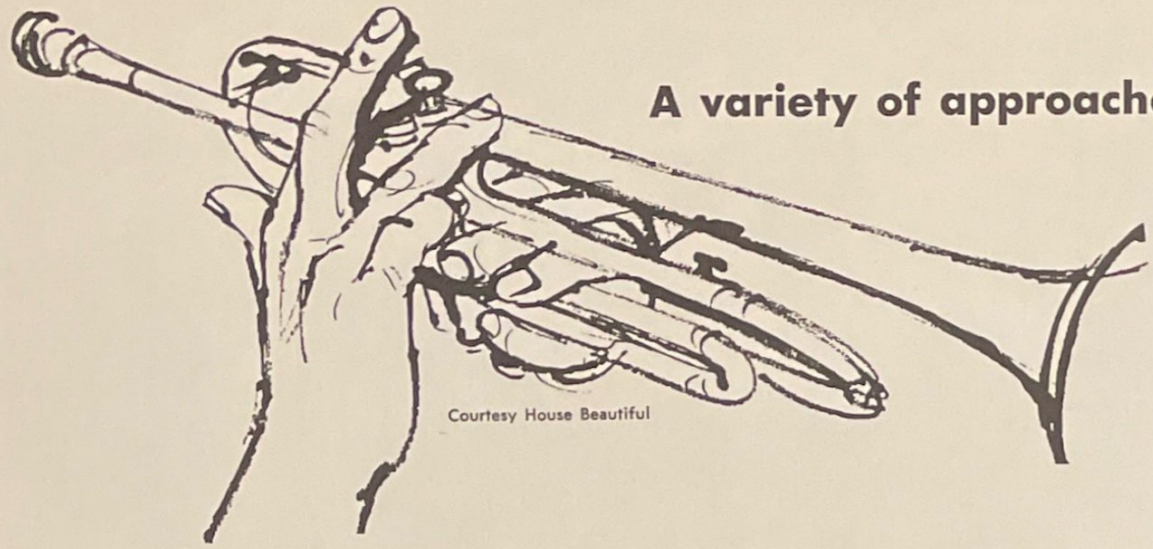
The texture and value of the sagebrush are characteristic of the plant. This type of rendering is used only on the sage and appears nowhere else here.

The light above the bent knee of the horse cuts over the base of the trees in the background. This helps the leg hold its position in the picture — and creates a dynamic force which makes the horse appear to move forward.

A few simple lines suggest the twist of the grain in the branches of the dead piñon tree. Nothing more is needed.

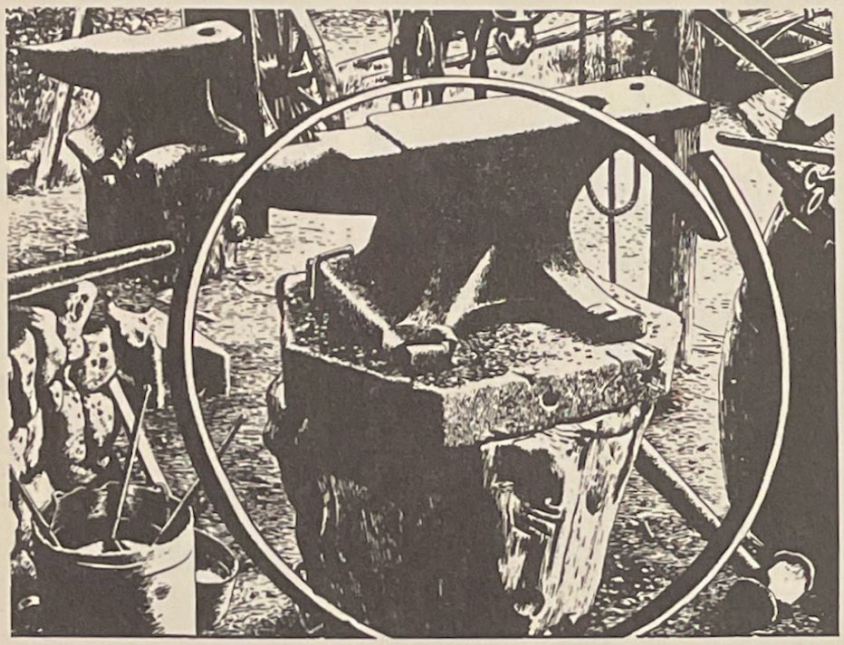
Note that the texture of the ground is suggested with a few small strokes of the brush. Practically all of the ground area is pure white paper.

A variety of approaches to line drawing



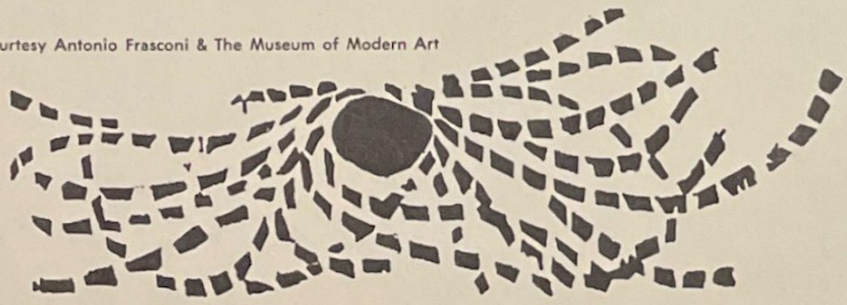
Courtesy House Beautiful

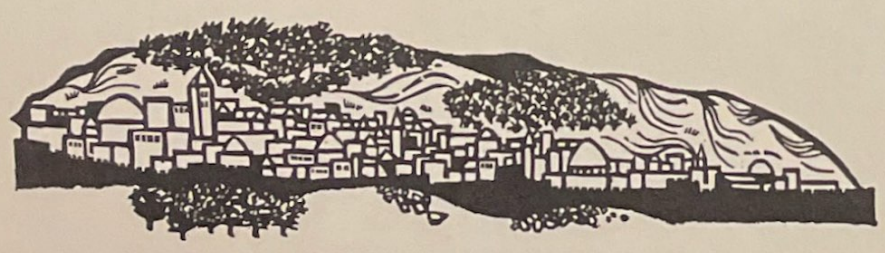
Austin Briggs: The artist made this drawing on a sheet of blotting paper with an embossed surface. The texture of this surface plus the absorbency of the blotter gives the ink line a rich, soft character quite different from the effect you would get on a harder, smoother surface such as illustration board or paper.



Stevan Dohanos: There is great precision in this line drawing made with brush and pen on illustration board. Large areas of black, such as the shadows on the anvils, stump, and barrel, were put in with a brush, while the detailed textures were made with pen strokes.

Courtesy Antonio Frasconi & The Museum of Modern Art





Antonio Frasconi: This distinguished artist works in one of the oldest of line mediums — the woodcut. He draws the design on a piece of soft wood and cuts away every area where he wants white to show. Then, to make his print, he covers the raised surface with printing ink, places soft Japanese rice paper over it, and rubs it with the back of a spoon.

Courtesy CBS Television Network

Ben Shahn: A brush and dark gray opaque water color were used by Ben Shahn to draw this illustration for Shakespeare's *Hamlet*. Shahn prefers to draw with his brush, without penciled guide lines. He uses his brush in a searching, almost painting-like way, as opposed to a slick line technique. He also makes his drawings the same size they will be reproduced, thus preserving the character of the original.

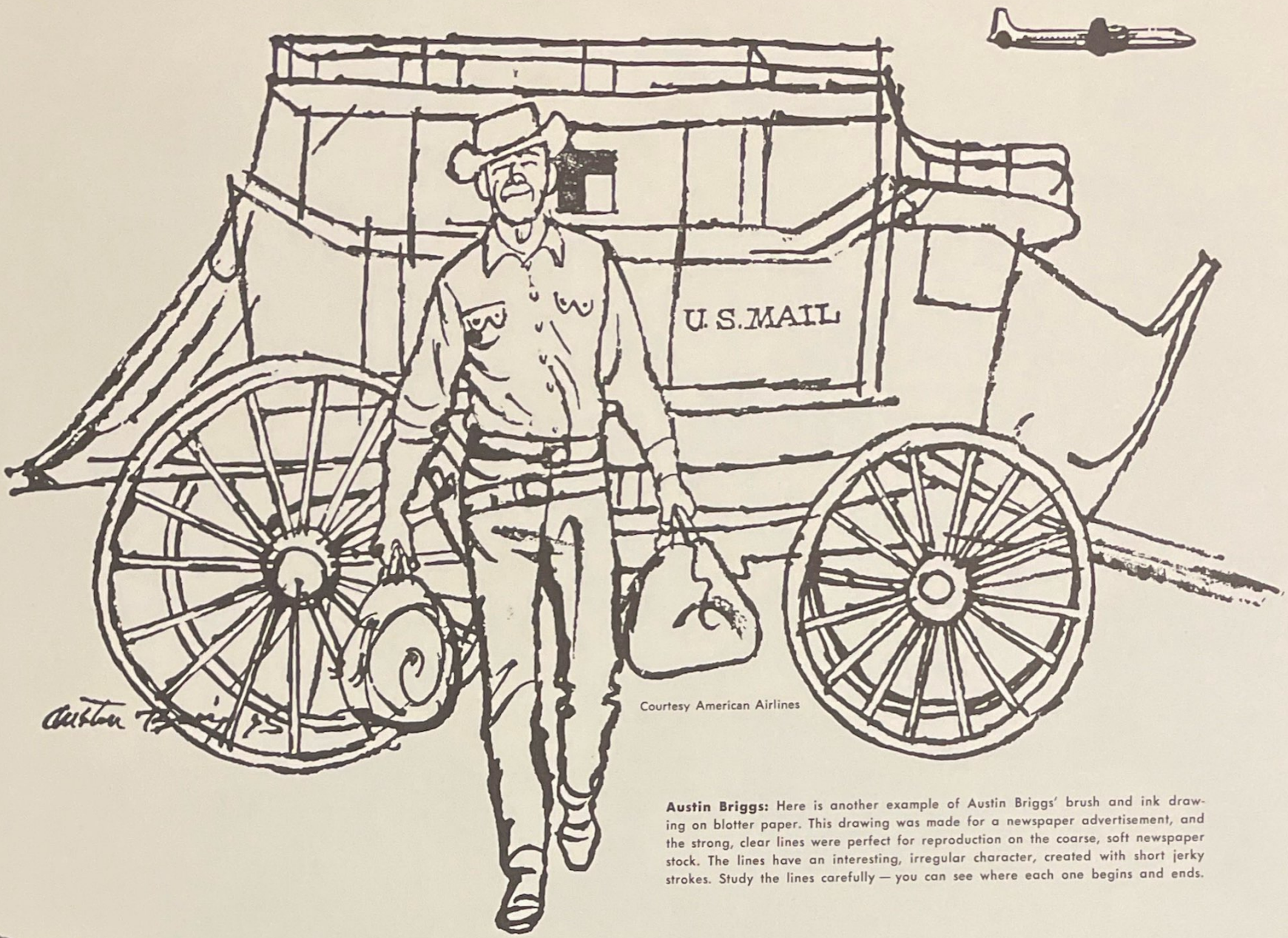
Ben Stahl: This simple figure was drawn with the direct, rapid strokes of a fountain pen filled with black ink. The drawing was made on ordinary bond paper.

Courtesy The Paris Sketchbook; published by George Braziller, N.Y.

Ronald Searle: For on-the-spot sketching, the simple, direct medium of pen and ink is hard to beat. Ronald Searle, celebrated English caricaturist, drew this scene with a fountain pen on a rough-surfaced sketchbook pad. For dark masses such as those in the trees at the upper left, he moistened a fingertip with his tongue and rubbed the ink lines on the paper into a solid black tone.

Stan Galli: This two-color line drawing was made on a rough-surfaced mat board. The artist first covered the board with an ochre tone (it appears as gray here), leaving untouched the areas where he wanted the pure white of the flowers and pigeons. Then he drew in ink over toned and white areas.

Al Parker: Great sensitivity marks this drawing in pencil line on a smooth gesso board. Parker has used the beautiful white gesso surface to create a line with a fine, even quality that is outstanding. The line is relieved by accents like those provided by the decoration on the purse and the heavier-weight lines around the eyes and eyebrows.



Courtesy American Airlines

Austin Briggs: Here is another example of Austin Briggs' brush and ink drawing on blotter paper. This drawing was made for a newspaper advertisement, and the strong, clear lines were perfect for reproduction on the coarse, soft newspaper stock. The lines have an interesting, irregular character, created with short jerky strokes. Study the lines carefully — you can see where each one begins and ends.

Courtesy Reader's Digest

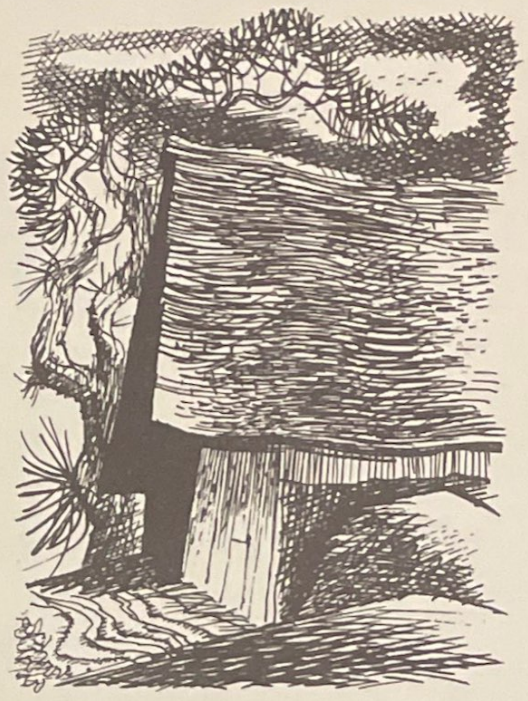
Noel Sickles: The heavy black lines of this drawing were done with a brush, the thinner lines with a pen. The very finest lines were made by turning the pen over and drawing with the back of the point. The tones shown here were colors added to the line drawing by the artist. The train, for example, was red. The artist indicated where this color was to go by painting in the area in black on an acetate overlay placed atop his line drawing and simply noted that the area should be printed in red. The important tone of the reflections was handled the same way — indicated on a separate overlay in black and marked to be printed in blue. The white strip in the center represents the gutter of the magazine.

Draw with reduction and reproduction in mind

Your work as a commercial artist will be judged by what appears on the printed page. For this reason, if you make your picture larger than the final printed size, you must consider what will happen when the picture is reduced. Remember that in a drawing which will be brought down to one-third its original size, for example, all of the lines and the spaces between them will be reduced proportionately.

The drawings at the right illustrate this point. The large one at the immediate right was done with reduction in mind, and all the lines hold up, even at a fraction of the original size. The second large drawing uses the same kind of technique but the artist was not alert to the problems that reproduction would create. In the reductions of this drawing many of the finer lines have "dropped out" because they were too delicate in the original. Other sections have "filled up," leaving a solid black mass where the artist wanted crosshatching. This is what happens if you make your lines too close.

Full size



Full size

Two-thirds size

Two-thirds size

One-third size

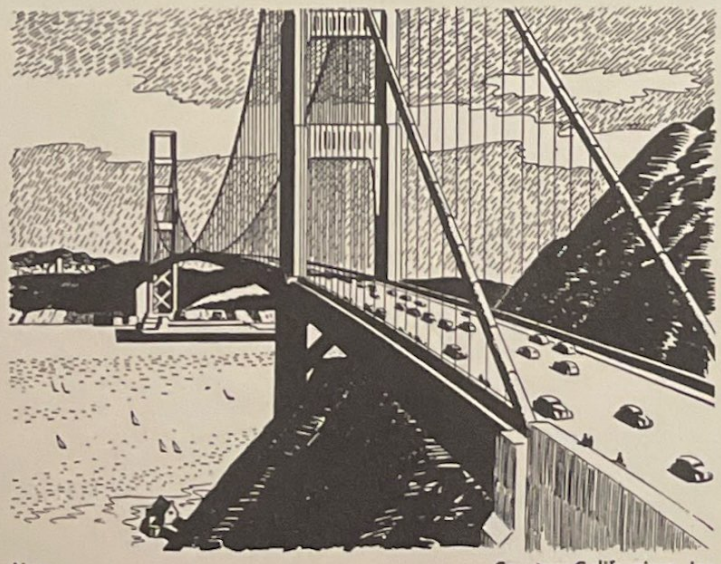
One-third size

Using line to suggest tones

Often you will find it advisable to employ line to create the effect of tone. You may do this because you wish to create a tonal picture that is suitable for line-plate reproduction, because you want to unify your picture by sticking strictly to line, or you prefer the subtle textural variation which cannot be achieved in quite the same way in a tonal painting.

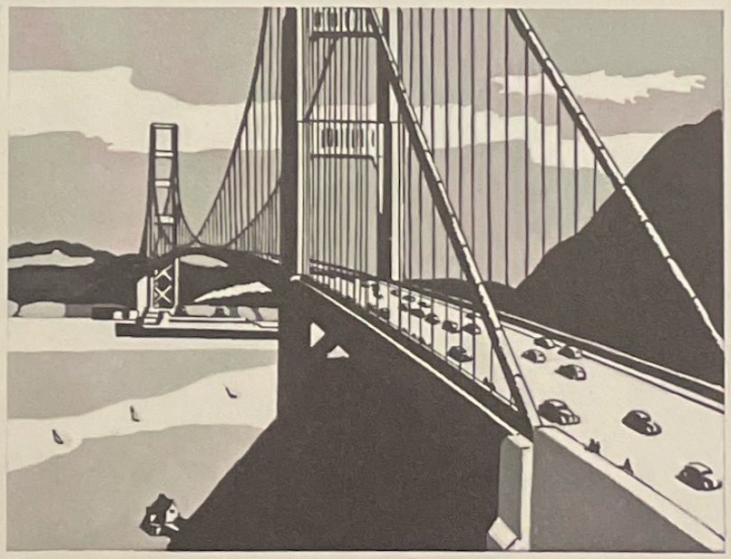
The line drawing below has been analyzed in a tonal diagram. This diagram shows the simple tonal pattern the artist interpreted in his line drawing. He did this through careful control of the interval and direction of his lines.

Beginners often make the mistake of becoming too absorbed in the quality of the individual lines and forget more important over-all tonal effects. Areas such as the sky behind the bridge can be handled successfully only if you keep in mind the tone you want to suggest. Notice that careful spacing of the rippled lines of the water has the effect of producing a light, flat tone, as shown in the tonal drawing.



Line

Courtesy Californians, Inc.



Tone

This picture, made by Al Parker for *Good Housekeeping*, is a beautiful example of tonal painting. In it you can quickly see the effects that can be achieved with tone — the solid tonal shapes, the broad range of values, the subtly blended tones, and the varied hard and soft edges. All have been skillfully used by the artist to create a convincing, lifelike picture.

Reproduced same size as original

Advanced tonal painting

Drawing in ink holds its special kind of fascination for the artist — but painting in tone has qualities that are just as unique and appealing. For one thing, tone is the best medium for creating a convincing illusion. With transparent wash, opaque, and other tonal mediums you can duplicate the whole range of values and textures you find in your subjects, and make incredibly real or naturalistic pictures. You can quickly mix any value of gray you wish instead of having to suggest this gray with many individual ink lines. Painting in tone also gives you great ease and control in handling edges in all their variety. Finally, of course, tonal mediums are the only practical ones for making full-color pictures.

Because tonal paintings do not contain merely black and white, but also include gradated tones of gray or color, they cannot be reproduced by line engraving. Instead, they are made into halftone engravings or printed by offset lithography. Today, halftone reproduction, particularly by offset lithography, has become so highly perfected that it is possible to reproduce with complete accuracy drawings made in just about any medium — pencil, pastel, and crayon, as well as the more conventional mediums of wash, opaque, casein, oil, and, of course, many different combinations of these.

In this part of the lesson you will study ways to use a variety of tonal mediums to full advantage in your pictures — explore the possibilities of these mediums as well as their limitations. New tonal mediums, techniques, and painting surfaces are constantly being developed and every wide-awake artist should at least be familiar with the main methods of working in tone which we will show you. You should try them all. Remember, however, that no single medium and no technique, no matter how tricky or clever, will ever be a substitute for good drawing and composition. At the same time, you should be sure that you are working with a medium and in a manner that you find comfortable. There are plenty of picture-making problems to be solved on every job and there is no reason for adding a problem of technique to them.

No matter what medium you are using, certain basic points must be considered. The first and most essential concerns a plan or method of procedure. A picture which contains many shapes and many different tones can easily get out of hand unless you have some organized, methodical way of going about your work and controlling the factors that enter into it.

In step-by-step demonstrations on the following pages you will see the methods of procedure used by different members of your Faculty in painting with the tonal mediums that are most popular in today's illustration. Each artist's method varies, like his work, but all build up the picture from start to finish in a logical, orderly manner developed through a constant search for better ways of working. In general, most professional artists believe in getting the large, simple masses of the picture under control first — making these masses, in their design and arrangement, tell as much of the story as possible. The demonstration by Peter Helck is an excellent example of this. When the artist is satisfied that he has his large masses right — and not before then — he goes on to put in the details.

We cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of establishing your pattern of masses and values at the start. Without a good design that clearly expresses the mood and feeling of your picture, details mean very little.

This is one point where students frequently stumble. They tend to overlook the need for this over-all design and, instead, spend endless hours working on details in the mistaken notion that careful surface rendering is what makes a good picture — or can save a bad one. Since the effect of the basic composition depends entirely on the skillful arrangement of the tonal areas and shapes, such effort is simply a waste of time. It is like trying to finish a room by applying wallpaper over the rough framing. If you skip the vital step of establishing a strong, coherent pattern of shapes and values or fail to maintain this strong pattern, you will inevitably end up with a picture that is weak as a composition and spotty and broken up in value.

Another basic point in working with tone is to keep all parts of your picture developing at the same time. Do not let yourself be tempted to finish up one small area of the picture before you have even put down all of your basic tones in the rest of it. It's much wiser to keep the over-all painting moving along at an even rate. This helps greatly in controlling the values and forms and is also a far more efficient way of keeping in touch with your whole picture.

Here we will also turn our attention to the effect of light and consider some interesting ways it may be used to reveal forms and also to establish the mood and character of the over-all picture. You will see how the so-called "local color" values or natural tones are influenced by lighting. In addition, we'll take a careful look at the part played by edges in our painting. Next to shapes and values, edges are the most important things to consider in drawing in tone. The hard, sharp edge, which tends to come forward in the picture and attracts attention, as opposed to the soft, diffused edge, which stays back and takes a subordinate place — we will go into both of these in detail.

The last portion of the lesson will show you examples of mixed mediums — pencil and pastel, line and wash, pencil and opaque, and others. Since the goal here is an interesting effect or picture, there are no rules as to which mediums may be used together. We want you to experiment with and try out, both singly and in combination, the different mediums we demonstrate here. Work boldly and directly and put down the tones you feel are appropriate for the effect you want. This will help you to overcome any timidity in working with new mediums or in using familiar ones in new ways — to achieve control of the whole picture space and the tones within it and create paintings that are highly original and expressive.

Interpreting tones in the model or photograph

Before you can paint a tonal subject well you must study and understand it thoroughly. You must recognize the tones or values that you see on the model or in the reference photo and what causes them. These tones are quite simple to analyze and, once you understand them, you can work with confidence, changing and rearranging values as will best suit the purpose of your picture.

The first point to consider in your analysis is the natural lightness or darkness of the objects themselves. A white shirt, a gray sweater, and black pants – the relative values of these things will stay about the same even though the light which falls upon them changes greatly. A bright light will make all three proportionately lighter, while all three will be proportionately darker if you cast a shadow on them. Keeping your basic value relationships consistent is important in a picture. No amount of detail or texture should be allowed to weaken or destroy them.

Next, you must analyze the pattern of light and shadow that falls over the form. Two things are basic in establishing this pattern. The first is the source of the light. Know where the light is coming from – whether from the side, above, or below, and at which angle – and keep this light source in mind while working. It will help you understand the form better and paint it more convincingly. The other thing to know is what part of the form is in shadow. The planes which face the light source form an over-all light pattern, while an over-all shadow pattern is made up of the planes which face away from the light. You can usually see these light and shadow areas clearly when your subject is lighted from one direction with one strong, dominant light. Step C on the opposite page shows this sharp separation of light and shade. Artists like Robert Fawcett and Fred Ludekens often use this dramatic contrast of light and shadow both to show form and create an over-all picture pattern. Fawcett calls this method "drawing with light" since all you put down in your sketch is areas of light and shadow and not the local values of the subject.

If the subject is struck by a second light coming from the opposite direction, this light should be very weak in comparison with the main one. Such a secondary light is almost always present and is useful for modeling the form in the shadows, but be sure it doesn't compete in strength with the main one. If it does, the form will appear cut up and confused by the competing lights coming from the two different directions.

You cannot always tell at first glance whether an area is in light or in shadow. If there is any doubt, look at your subject with squinted or half-closed eyes. This eliminates the subtle tones and makes the edge between light and shadow easily recognizable.

When you show variations of tone within the shadow, be very sure to keep them dark enough so they will not break up the general shadow shape. The same advice applies to the light areas. Don't overmodel them or they will break up the light pattern. Here, again, squinting at the subject helps. Forms which are in middle value show up the separation of light and shadow best. This separation is harder to see on extremely light or dark objects such as a white shirt or a black pair of pants, particularly if the forms have soft, subtle contours and no sharp, clear-cut planes.

There are, then, two reasons for differences in tone. One is the local color of the object – the object itself may be lighter or darker than the things around it. The other reason is the light or shadow on it. If you keep these two reasons in mind you should have no difficulty in understanding the tones you see on your subject and transferring them to your picture to create a convincing illusion.

A

The model

Here is the figure as you see it when drawing from the model or photo. It contains enough information to make a good tone drawing.

The local values

Here you see the natural or local color values on the model. The effect of light and shade is not shown. Notice the value relationships. The hair, belt, and shoes are darkest, the skin is somewhat lighter, the shovel still lighter, and the trousers are lightest of all. You should have a clear picture of these value relationships before you begin to draw.

Light and shadow pattern

This is a pure form drawing. Think of it as a light and shadow chart which shows you the size, shape, and position of the planes which are struck by the light and those which are in shadow. The local color values are ignored completely. This is the kind of a drawing you would make with a plaster cast or statue as a model.

Light and shadow plus local color

Here is the finished drawing. The artist combined the local color values of B with the pure form drawing of C to complete the illusion of real three-dimensional form. Notice that the lights and shadows have been carefully controlled so they would not destroy the natural values.

A B C D E

Here is an edge chart. It shows five variations in the width of the edge between two tones. Example A shows a clean, crisp overlap with a hard, sharp edge. There has been no attempt to blend or brush these tones together. The edge is so narrow we cannot measure it with our eye. As our eye moves to the right the edges become progressively wider or softer. Example E is the widest or softest edge in the chart.

These diagrams show how we can create the illusion of a soft or blended edge by decreasing the value contrast between two tones. The actual hard edge between tones in all three diagrams is exactly the same.

Controlling the edges of tones

In addition to values, there is still another factor which will help us control tones and make them do what we want them to. This factor is the control of edges.

Edges can be "hard" or "soft" – or have any degree of hardness or softness. When we speak of a very hard edge, we refer to a sharp, dividing edge between two tones of very strong contrast, as shown in Example A above. A hard edge of this kind catches the eye. It should be used in your pictures at important, story-telling points, where you want to focus the attention and interest of your audience. Of course, you can have a hard edge between two tones which are very close in value. In these instances, however, the edge will not seem nearly as hard as it will if the two tones are sharply contrasted.

On the other hand, you can have a very soft edge, like that seen in Example E above. In this case, two contrasting values are blended together with an almost imperceptible gradation. As a result it is difficult to point out a specific line as the "edge." The eye moves easily over such edges, and passes on to sharper edges which will catch and hold its attention. If a soft, gradated edge is used between two tones which are very close in value, the edge will appear even softer than a soft edge between two strongly contrasting tones.

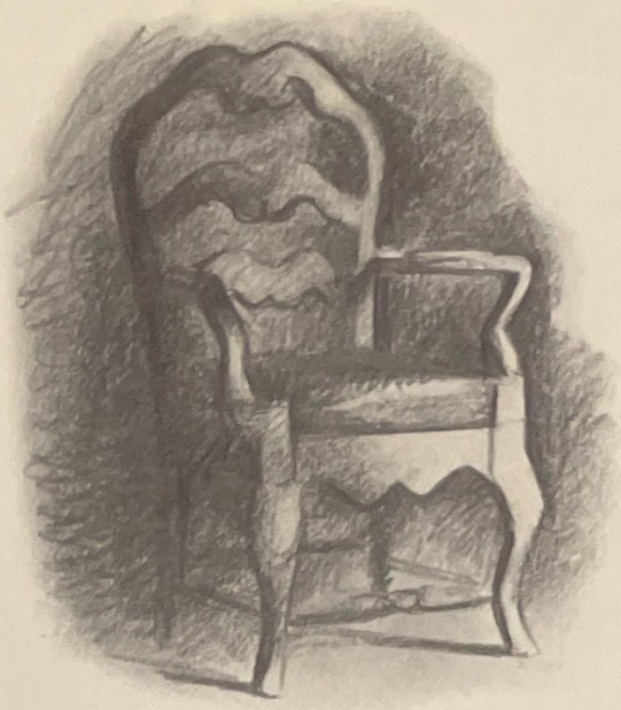
It will pay you to make an extensive study of edges, because they are extremely useful when it comes to pulling pictures together and controlling the viewer's attention.

Suppose, for example, that you are working on an architectural or industrial subject. You must include a steel girder which is very unimportant to the painting as far as storytelling interest is concerned. You'd like to have the viewer's eye pass over it quickly, and get on to more interesting material. How can you minimize the interest of the edge here?

This poses a real problem, because if you make the edge soft and fuzzy the girder will no longer look convincing as a piece of steel. If you make the edge sharp, as it must be, it is likely to attract too much attention. The answer is simple. Just relate the values between the piece of steel and its surroundings fairly closely. Then you can use a sharp edge – but the eye will pass over it without giving it undue attention.

On the other hand, suppose you are working with a very soft material, such as a woman's coat. In order to convey the character of the texture, you feel you should use a rather soft edge – and yet you would like to attract attention to this edge. Again you can use value relationships to help you. Create a strong contrast of black and white between the coat and the background, and the eye will certainly be held by this area, even though the edge is soft.

If you master this interplay between values and edges, you can force the eye to move through your picture as you choose, and control the attention of the viewer so that he will concentrate on the parts of your picture on which you want him to focus.



The large drawing of the chair shows how Ben Stahl applies in his own work the principles explained on the opposite page. He forces you to look at the leg at the right by adding the strongest value contrast to the hardest edge. The other edges remain subdued because they are softer and closer in value to the background. Stahl comments: "I see no reason why one should make the objects in his illustrations look like furniture catalogue drawings such as the one at the right."

In this drawing, notice how the edges are accented or hardened at the points where the rhythm and structure are most interesting. The softened edges help explain the soft but solid form. Edges must be varied from soft to hard in order to create variety and rhythm. These points are explained below.

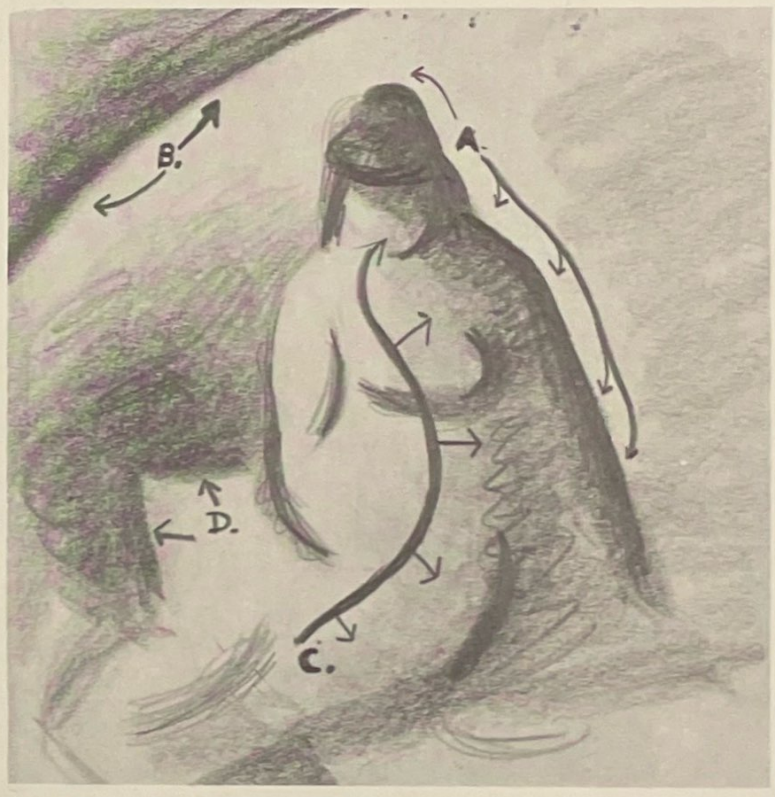
The importance of controlling edges — Stahl

Students frequently have a tendency to compose their pictures as though every form, figure, or shape were an entity in itself, entirely unrelated to any other in the picture. As a result the individual parts of their painting have a "pasted-down," unconvincing look. One of the best ways to avoid this and pull your picture together is to learn how to handle edges intelligently and effectively.

Every object in nature has, of course, a definite tonal relationship with every other object. Look around you. Learn to appreciate the beautiful and subtle transitions of tone which occur in nature — and the sudden dramatic changes from dark to light and light to dark. See how well all the values hold their place, like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle properly assembled. If you can feel and understand the beauty and power of these tonal relationships in nature, you will soon be handling values and tonal edges effectively in your own work.

It is a mistake to try to "bring out" everything in your pictures. You need not be afraid to lose edges. Actually, a soft, lost edge can be just as powerful as an edge that is sharply defined. Don't hesitate to soften and lose edges — especially in the early stages of a painting. It is much easier to sharpen an edge than soften one.

I believe that the edges in a picture should have a generally consistent character, except for the few you will make stand out for carefully considered reasons. An edge is only soft or hard by contrast. Whether you choose to make all your edges relatively hard, or prefer to work with consistently soft edges, is a matter which you must settle for yourself. A hard edge tends to appear soft in reproduction while too subtle an edge may be lost. If you are working for clear reproduction you must take this fact into consideration. But, in any case, the most important thing is to handle edges intelligently and logically, giving them all the attention they deserve because of the basic role they play in picture making.



Line A is a strong, hard edge which is important both to the composition and to the figure action. Line B is also a hard edge. It balances A and carries the movement around the picture. The girl's right arm completes this movement, but in a more subtle manner. D is a counter-shape — a discord which stabilizes the picture and prevents A and B from setting up too much rhythmic movement. The edge of D is sharpened to make this shape more effective. C is an inner edge which is softened and hardened where needed to give fullness and solidity to the form. It is this edge which carries the most interest because of its variety. Hold an orange in a strong side light; you will notice that the edge where the light turns to dark is the most interesting.

The over-all design comes first

PETER HELCK

First stage: Here is my preliminary drawing, made in pencil on tracing paper. It is the result of first-hand research — careful observation and sketching inside a steel mill. I am excited by the dramatic possibilities of the subject — the large, husky figures of the workmen set against the hot glow and fury of the furnace. I want my finished picture to express all of this, as well as the atmosphere of the mill — the over-all haze of fumes and smoke, which provides a muted background for the contrasting blaze of color from the furnace.

Second stage: This shows the rolled-on pigment, a riot of color with just a suggestion of the shapes and forms of the pencil composition.

Although the technique I used to make this picture is an unusual one, I think it demonstrates very clearly how important is the broad, over-all pattern of a tonal painting. You must establish the big, basic design of lights, middle values, and darks at the outset. These masses of value, properly composed, will tell a good part of your story, and can help suggest just the feeling you want.

My subject is a steel mill, with two husky workmen preparing ingot molds just prior to the pouring of hot metal. In the background is an electric furnace. The first step I take in getting down to work is a routine one. I make a pencil drawing of the composition on tracing paper, using models and notes taken at the scene. Then, instead of transferring my drawing to illustration board and painting it in my usual manner, I try something quite different.

My medium is opaque (gouache). Using only a palette knife, I spread masses of paint on the illustration board and establish the main areas of light, dark, and middle tone shown in the composition. I then take a roller and roll these masses flat, blending each mass with its neighbor. Now, although there's hardly a suggestion of a single recognizable shape, the rough areas of paint alone create the structure of a highly dramatic composition. Obviously, at this stage the picture is not yet a clear communication. I must now finish it, but I want to be sure that I hold onto the vigorous, exciting feeling of this stage.

When my tones have dried thoroughly, I put my tissue drawing over them and transfer the lines to the painted surface. The transferred lines are hard to see, but they immediately organize the area. With much anticipation, I swing into the next stage.

I begin now to draw with the brush. I put in the figures, the equipment, and the background of the interior. Where necessary, I scrub out some rolled-on color with bristle brushes and replace it with the tone I want. I save my lightest and brightest color accents as a climax for the fire and fury of the furnace in the background.

Little by little, out of the seemingly chaotic mass of paint that was my second stage the finished picture emerges. It shows my subject – I call it "Melt Shop" – just the way I planned it in the composition drawing. But it shows the subject much more strongly and sharply – with real feeling – because of the way I arranged the large, simple masses of the abstract pattern. Always remember: The over-all design comes first.

Third and final stage: The drawing has been restored and order and form painted into the rolled-on pigment. With opaque you can lose form and restore it, ruin a bit of color and regain it.

This is the well-filled top of my taboret.

Painting in casein — Stahl

One of the most versatile and interesting mediums that I have ever painted with is casein. The kind I use is put up in tubes just like oil paint and is made from the curd of skim milk, linseed oil, pigment, and an alkaline agent. It is a favorite medium with many artists today, including myself.

Painting in casein has been going on for a long time. It had been in use for centuries when oil painting was discovered. Then casein went into an eclipse. Oil could give the painter better control over blending edges and tones. For a long while the preferred medium was predominantly oil.

A number of years ago I used casein paint for the first time and was delighted with the results. Here, I felt, was a medium that had more advantages for me than many others I had tried. You can handle it like oil paint — that is, as a thick opaque medium, creating textures like those of oils — or you can thin down your paint and use it almost like a transparent wash. When a thick casein painting is varnished, it is almost impossible to tell it from a picture done in oils. Without varnishing, it has a matte or dull surface similar to opaque water color.

Casein dries rapidly, which is a further point in its favor. You can apply it to almost any surface — paper, canvas, gesso panel, illustration board, or Masonite, which is really sturdy. Thinner materials (paper, particularly) tend to buckle, and the thick casein may crack and chip off. Make sure you use a surface that is rigid enough for the thickness of the paint.

One disadvantage of casein is that it's tough on brushes. Before you put down a brush, swish it around in your water bowl to make sure the bristles are clean. Never let paint dry in them.

Brushes and palette

I prefer to draw with a brush and often use a No. 5 sable watercolor brush for this purpose when painting with casein. If I am using casein to lay in the large tones, I use a No. 5 bristle oil brush (for work on big pictures I use larger brushes). I prefer the oil bristle brushes generally because they are stiffer and permit me to paint more vigorously.

After the drawing is established, I believe that, for casein painting, you should lay in the first tones with bristle brushes and finish with sables.

I keep a number of razor blades handy which are used to scrape out mistakes or smooth down passages or areas where the paint has piled up. Interesting effects can be attained in some areas — such as in old walls and earth — by scraping paint away with a razor blade. I also use the razor blades to clean the palette as I work.

You may wish to keep some parts of the picture flexible and wet for a while and want other areas to dry immediately. To retard over-all drying wherever you wish, use a few drops of Shiva media varnish in the paint on that area. To get similar results you can use a mixture of one-third zinc white oil paint

to two-thirds casein while continuing to use water as a mixing medium. I generally keep a cup of media varnish on my taboret and sometimes dip into it and sometimes into the water, depending on whether I want the area to dry slowly or quickly.

I've mixed just about everything with casein, from India ink to oil color, and have never found a combination that didn't work. I've even used turpentine instead of water as a medium. Casein can save you many headaches.

For a palette I use a fairly large butcher's tray. Each individual color is not squeezed out in a pile but in a "V" shape with the top ends of the "V" against the wall of the tray. Inside this "V" I drop a bit of water or media varnish. Doing this prevents the pile of pigment from drying out too fast. Another method of keeping your paint pliable is to squeeze strips of it onto wet felt. The only drawback to this is that after a while your palette gets very messy.

At the end of a day of painting, soak a long strip of cloth in clear water and lay it over the color remaining on your palette. In the morning your color will still be moist and ready for use.

Preparing the surface

Before I paint, I "tone" the surface — spread over it a thin, flat layer of paint, usually transparent. This tone can be applied directly to canvas, a gesso surface, or illustration board. However, if you use Masonite, be sure to cover its dark brown surface with a couple of coats of flat white inside house paint and let them dry before you begin toning. The purpose of toning is to establish one over-all value to which you may relate your light and dark tones — so you can judge just how light or dark they are. If you work directly on a pure white surface it is difficult to gauge the value of your tones. The usual tendency is to work in too high a key — to make both light and dark tones too light.

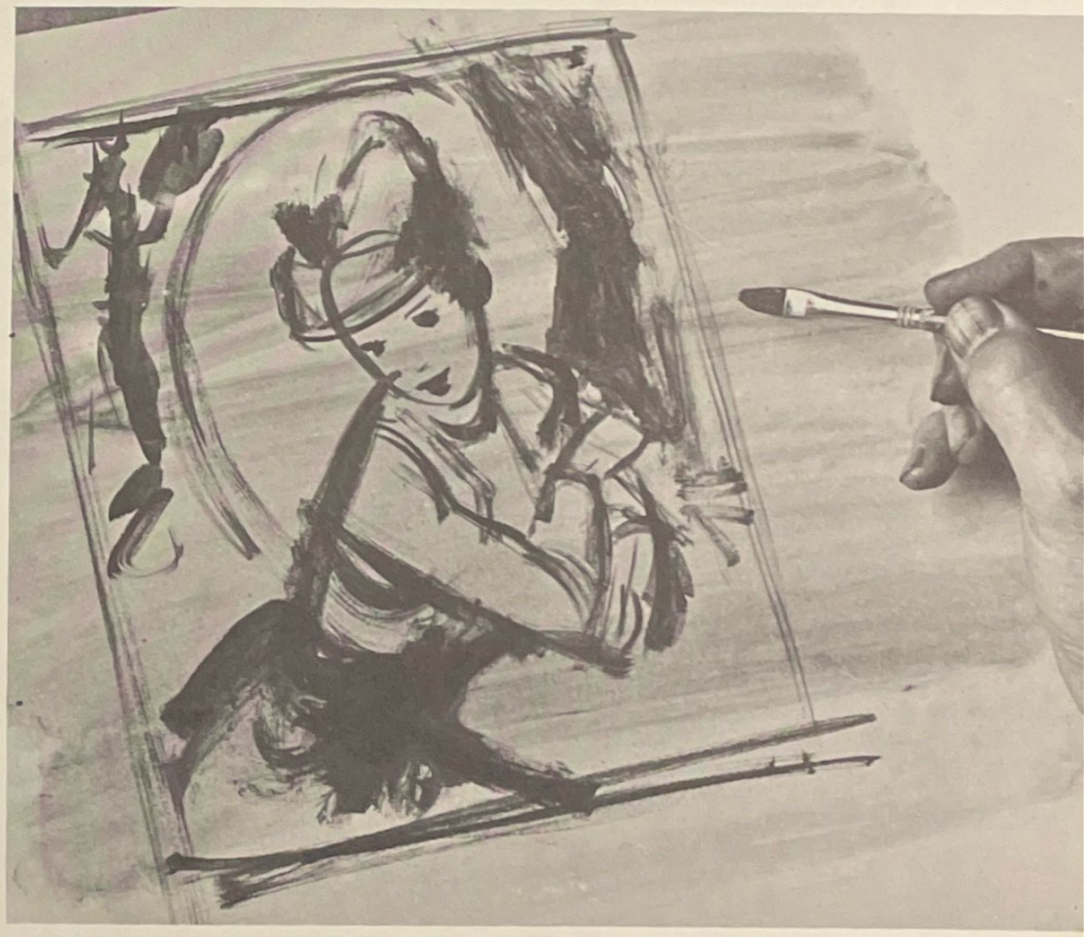
The color used in toning also helps establish your color harmony. For example, if I were doing a picture which was to be predominantly green, I might use a greenish gray, brushed over the surface.

A careful color selection at this point will help unify your colors because much of the background color may show through in the finish — either through transparent areas or on otherwise unpainted areas. I must caution you, however, not to key your picture too low in value — the toned surface will influence you to do this if you are not careful.

In toning a surface, experiment with various color combinations. For example, mix vermilion and emerald green on your palette with your palette knife. Add a few drops of turpentine and a few drops of Valspar varnish to hasten drying. Smear this mixture over your surface with a brush or clean rag. Use enough of the vermilion and emerald green mixture to cover the surface. Then take a dry rag and spread the mixture evenly over the whole area. Allow this to dry — it will take two or three hours.

When you're ready to paint, give the whole surface a very thin skin of Shiva media varnish. As you paint into this wet surface the casein absorbs the varnish and, although it still dries rapidly, it retains a lustre and does not change value excessively.

On the following pages I show you, step by step, how I make a painting in casein. This is the first step of the painting demonstration — my pencil sketch. I drew it from imagination.



This is a picture of the very first stage of the painting. You'll notice that I am working over the background tone, which I brushed on very casually with large, broad strokes. Here I am drawing in casein, using a flat bristle brush. The paint is thin, as I want to establish the picture's main masses and structure quickly.

Lesson **15** Famous Artists Course

Advanced line drawing and tonal painting

I continue to work quite boldly, using the same bristle brush and smearing the paint in quite wet. The less water I use the more control I have over the paint, but actually at this beginning stage I don't want too much control — I just want to get the big things stated, and fairly heavy use of watery paint allows me to do just that.

As you see, I'm working quite roughly. For example, I don't attempt to paint neatly up to any edges, and little things like an eye may be fully painted over without concern at this stage. I'm trying to get the whole picture under control and not finish up any one part of it yet.

Notice that the toned surface provides the middle values for my picture. To make these values show up properly and to see the picture more clearly, I paint a white frame around it. At this point I am concerned only with the few really basic values, of course.

Now the picture is beginning to shape up. I have gone back and strengthened and accented some things. I'm also more careful about the edges and I'm piling the lighter tones on with much paint and little water. I lay the eyes and nose and mouth in with very dry gray paint.

I continue with the bristle brush because I want a tool that will make it easy to scumble and get soft edges and, at the same time, allow me to apply rich gobs of paint. A sable brush does not do that very well.

At this point my big structural lines have been almost entirely covered with the more finished painting, but you can sense that they are still there. I have also been working at bringing out the planes in the head and body. One of the things I particularly like about casein is that you don't have to wait a long time for it to dry before you overpaint.

I switch back and forth from a small sable brush to an oil bristle and then, as shown here, to a larger sable. I'm trying to create a variety of edges with these tools.

A razor blade comes in handy. Here you see me using one to scrape off excessively piled-up paint. I scrape off only enough to get an interesting effect. I also use a razor blade to kill a brush stroke that stands out too much.

I dislike pictures in which I am more conscious of the clever brush strokes than I am of the things these strokes are supposed to represent. Brush marks in a picture should vary. No two should look exactly alike, and many should not appear as if they were applied with a brush, even though that's the way they were done. Scraping with a razor blade helps eliminate these problems.

Earlier I had indicated the hand in the lower right corner as only a rough shape. By adding just a few strokes to that shape I have made a hand out of it. I have simplified the values on the parasol and softened the edges along the face, making it much more lifelike. Remember that heavily piled-up paint I was removing in the previous stage? The razor blade got rid of it but, in the process, broke up the dark, quiet background. I have repainted part of this, and now the figure stands out and the background holds its place.

My next step is to spray the whole painting with retouch varnish (a mixture of one-third shellac and two-thirds alcohol). This is necessary because some pigments (like umber) dry more rapidly than others and become lighter and duller. As a result, it is difficult to compare them with other tones which are still wet. The retouch spray brings all these values into their true relationship.

Here I am using a small clean cloth soaked with Shiva media varnish, spreading it lightly over the painting. The varnish helps me control the blending of soft, subtle edges and, like the spray already mentioned, keeps the values from getting duller and lighter. It has the added virtue of allowing me to paint without worrying about picking up the underpainting. I correct annoying shapes, add bits of detail, and, in general, polish up the whole painting.

After the casein dries, I give the picture a final coat of damar varnish or Valspar.

Here is the final painting, which gives you a good idea of the character of casein. Notice that I have floated some white casein over that dark shadow on top of the girl's right shoulder to soften that overwhelming black accent. The paint is quite thick and heavy in the light areas, particularly on her blouse. Shadows are kept thin. The general effect is much like that of an oil painting.

Painting with colored inks

ALBERT DORNE

Over a period of many years, thousands of people — laymen as well as artists and students — have looked at my pictures and asked, "In what medium do you paint?" Since my picture technique has been considered everything from oil painting to water color and almost every other color medium, the answer, "Colored inks," usually comes as quite a surprise.

For almost all my professional life I have painted with these colored inks and have found them the most gratifying medium for what I try to accomplish in my pictures. Since my fundamental approach to pictures emphasizes the interpretation of character and situation, and since all my efforts are based on a thorough and detailed drawing, I feel that the inks give me the most satisfying results — both because they are easy to handle (with experience, of course), and because I believe they are the most foolproof medium for color reproduction.

It is true that other mediums make available many effects and color qualities which the inks do not — but, on the other hand, the colored ink medium has advantages of its own which make it unique. Here are just three of these advantages: (1) It is utterly transparent. (2) While it is water soluble, it is waterproof when dry. (3) Many coats of transparent color can be applied one over the other without picking up the undercoat, to create a rich and luminous effect. This process is called glazing and the coats are called glazes.

Artists almost without exception have looked upon colored inks simply as a color medium used to fill in an "area between two lines" — primarily because no one has taken the trouble to explore its possibilities. On the other hand, I have produced pictures in this medium which, under a coat of varnish, have at first glance been taken by experts for oil paintings.

Underpainting

In its broadest sense, the painting technique of colored inks as I use them is not unlike that employed by most of the old masters — a series of transparent color glazes laid on over an underpainting. In my case, except for flesh, which I underpaint in a prepared sepia, almost all of the rest of my underpainting is done with black waterproof ink. Actually I make what is almost a finished black and white painting. In this important step I establish all the values, model the forms, and paint the textures of the various elements in the picture. The main difference between my black and white underpainting and a finished black and white picture is that all of my high-key areas are exaggerated. Where I eventually wish to see pure color I put no tones.

Color

The color phase of the painting is done by the simple process of glazing the colored inks over the black and white underpainting, layer upon layer, until the desired depth of color and richness is reached. A fine quality of the inks is that the color gets richer and stronger as one layer is painted over the other. The inks, being water soluble, can be broken down to any degree of intensity — in proportion to the dilution of the color with water.

In spite of all the virtues of this medium, some of the colors are rather fugitive and after a period of years will begin to fade. This can be overcome successfully by applying a coat of clear varnish over the finished picture. (I use a pure damar varnish and pure spirits of turpentine in equal parts.) Besides its protective qualities, the varnish will add a surprising depth and richness to the painting. In the following picture sequence I will point out the do's and don'ts as well as the step-by-step painting procedure.

At the beginning of this text I said that this is a gratifying painting technique — with experience, of course. I would like to point out that no painting technique has ever been described or taught as satisfactorily as it can be learned through actual application and practice by the individual. Only by the trial-and-error method have any painting facility, skill, and real understanding of a medium ever been achieved.

1 Drawing in rather abstract terms, I design the picture, and begin to define the basic forms of the elements which the picture will contain.

2 A tree — a fence — some landscape with rocks — clouds — the side of a barn — and a farmer — will give me several textural problems.

3 I do all my creative planning, drawing, and changing of my mind on a layout pad. You will shortly see its great advantage.

4 A thoroughly detailed and disciplined drawing is necessary in building a solid foundation on which to paint with colored inks.

The pencil drawing

Drawing is the architecture of painting. Skill in drawing and ability to organize forms and space into a well-ordered composition are the most fundamental requirements of the artist.

This is especially so in preparing to do painting in colored inks. As you will see later, because the inks are a highly transparent medium and the background of the paper supplies the highest light, it is very important that the drawing of your picture be thoroughly established before you begin to paint.

5 I blacken the reverse side of my drawing with a very soft pencil — and, brushing off the excess carbon with a clean cloth —

6 — I transfer the drawing to the painting surface, illustration board, using a very hard pencil and tracing through only what I want.

7 The drawing here has been traced down on illustration board. Because of the high transparency of the colored inks, a most important requirement in the preparation of this kind of painting is a clean drawing on a spotless background. The type of surface you work on is a matter of individual preference. For this demonstration I am using cold-pressed Whatman illustration board. This surface is slightly rough and has a definite tooth. The fact that it is pure white is very important in painting with transparent color.

8

Using a sable brush and black waterproof ink only, I now begin the most important phase of the picture — the underpainting. Starting with the tree *(above)*, I paint and model its form, texture and values. Like the texture of the barn siding, some areas of the bark texture are done by dragging a rather dry brush over the paper surface to create a rough effect. The texture of the hat is put in with a wetter brush.

9

Remember — all the forms, textures, values, and light and shade will be modeled and painted in black ink — except the head and hands of the farmer. I am now modeling the texture of fieldstone at the base of the barn. Keep in mind that the ink is water soluble while wet and can be diluted with water to the faintest value. Once it dries, however, it becomes waterproof. I use a rather heavy, rich black ink that has considerable body. Most manufacturers make it and refer to it as "dense" ink. It is too heavy for pen drawing.

10

Just as in ordinary wash drawing, I keep washing on deeper tones as I model the drapery and wrinkles in the farmer's shirt. At this stage, note the finished texture of the fieldstone. Like the barn siding, it was done with a rather dry brush. The tones and values of the over-all picture are being built up with wet washes. As you paint, you must "feel" the different textures you are creating. If the texture is rough — paint roughly. If the texture is smooth — paint smoothly.

11

To model the head and hands, I now deviate slightly from the pure black. (Never underpaint flesh tones with black alone.) For this purpose, using an individual porcelain cup, I develop a warm sepia color by mixing full-strength vermilion — orange — and the black — until I have a rich reddish-brown. The "body" to model with is supplied by the black ink in the mixture. Don't use bottled sepia for modeling — it is much too thin.

12

With the full-strength sepia mixture I have drawn the character and features of the farmer. Remember — the ink dries almost immediately and you can work over it again and again. Next, in modeling the head, I lay a light wash (as in picture No. 11 above). It dries in a few minutes and is ready for the following layer of wash — and so on until I reach the intensity of hue and value I want on the over-all form of the head. I then can model the individual smaller forms of the features and structure of the head with a slightly drier brush.

13

I repeat the process in painting the hands — first pinning down the drawing — next modeling the forms with progressive shades of the sepia diluted with less water each time. Keep in mind that you can go on building up the richness of your sepia in intensity without losing your drawing. Keep feeling form as you paint. Note that I am dragging a fairly dry brush "around" the form of the finger. Remember that no matter how many washes of colored inks you lay over your underpainting, it will show through. Don't forget that I eventually use reds — blues — greens — the many other colors that you find in flesh tones — before I finish the head and hands.

14

Now back to the black ink to finish the underpainting. The tree in this step appears completed in form and texture — actually at this stage it is almost a finished black and white painting. I have begun to paint in the forms of the clouds, trying to get the feel of the billowing cloud forms with my brush strokes. As each layer of ink wash dries, I keep repeating layer upon layer, constantly modeling the billowing effect.

15

Do not be afraid to go quite black in the areas in which you want to achieve a deep, rich quality — as I have done in the cloud formations. The lower left area has been modeled and textured. The boulders, grass, and fence — like the rest of the picture — are now being painted with a combination of dry and wet washes. You must remember always to plan ahead. Always keep in mind the effect of light and color you wish to end up with in the area or parts you are working on.

16

Aside from the sepia used to model the head and hands, we now have virtually a finished black and white painting — with one important difference. While all the values have been washed in, an exaggerated contrast of these values is quite obvious. In the areas where I eventually want pure color, I have been careful to leave pure white paper. For example — the farmer's shirt — the lower half of the sky — and the light areas of the farmer's face and hands. And, finally, I have completely modeled and textured all the elements and forms in this black and white underpainting. We are now ready for color.

17

The tools are simple. Bottles of colored ink — a few sable brushes — a porcelain sectional palette — a nest of mixing cups — and plenty of water. You will also need a kneaded eraser to keep your paper surface clean — and an ink eraser to rub out mistakes or make changes. A most important consideration in colored-ink painting is the quality of your paper. Cheap or soft papers will not do. These inks are not dyes and they will not stain Whatman or other fine-quality hard papers. Since the inks are waterproof when dry, you cannot wash a color out (as in water color) — you must gently erase it down to the white paper surface. My own palette of colors consists of several brands of inks. You will find from your own experience that certain manufacturers vary the same colors slightly — after a while you will develop your own personal preferences.

18

A small comprehensive color sketch establishing your basic color arrangement is important, to guide you when you begin glazing. Because the inks are so transparent, every color is affected by those over which it is washed. Once a color is down it is difficult to change it. For these reasons a color sketch does double duty in helping you to get the colors right the first time. I have begun to paint the barn siding with pure vermilion red. First I washed on a light tone of red diluted with water, to condition the paper surface. In a few minutes, when it was dry, I washed another and deeper coat of red over the first coat. I repeated this once more and, finally, I am now putting on pure vermilion red — and right out of the bottle.

19

Don't get scared if the textures and forms you worked on so hard in your underpainting seem to be disappearing as you apply the colored inks — the inks look much darker and more opaque while they are still wet. They will dry and all the textures and forms will show through, no matter how many coats of ink you put on. Experience will show you how sharply you should define your textures and forms — much depends on whether you will eventually use a light color tone or full-strength color over the object. I am painting almost a full-strength cobalt blue into the cloud formations. It looks almost solid now, because it is wet, but in the last picture you can see how transparently it dried.

20

In painting color into the ground area and rocks, I used many colors, some pure, some diluted with water — mixed in a sectional palette. Because the area was small, I could keep them all wet and "going" at the same time in a wet-in-wet blending effect — much as in water color. The colors were orange, two greens, turquoise, cobalt blue, yellow and indigo. Remember this: Because the inks dry rapidly, this wet-in-wet technique can be used only in smaller areas — and you must work fast. Don't keep working over an area too long, because inks become tacky as they dry.

21

I have just painted the local color of the farmer's shirt. As when coloring the barn siding, I first "conditioned" the paper with a light wash of blue — then a deeper wash over that when dry. After this I worked purer and deeper color into the deep gray folds and wrinkles, turning them into deep blue by forcing color into these areas by painting fairly dry and with pressure on my brush as I worked. A variety of browns and warm colors were painted into the dark areas of the tree in the same way — many coats of color, glazed one over the other as they dried, literally forced the color into these deep areas. Remember that all the forms will become whatever colors are glazed over them — while still retaining their original value relationships.

22

The head was painted last. You will recall that I had already modeled the forms in light and shade with sepia color. I now painted into the forms of the nose and cheeks with diluted washes of pure reds and pinks — keeping these colors quite bright. In the same manner I painted in the jowls and beard areas with blues and greens. Ochres and siennas were used to model the chin and neck areas — all pure color. Next I laid a light wash of burnt sienna over the entire light area. Under this wash of local color, all the small areas of bright color pulled together into a uniform color relationship. Another light wash of burnt sienna made the skin more luminous. Finally, to cool the warm siennas and sepia in the shadow areas, I used light washes of blues and cool greens — and our demonstration of colored ink painting is finished.

The finished painting

Though this picture was painted entirely with black and colored inks, it has not been my intention to advise purism in this medium. I often use opaque water color to accentuate a special light or give a special emphasis in certain areas. Many artists, in fact, use colored inks in conjunction with other mediums. My fellow Faculty members all have individual preferences in the mediums they use. We all agree, however, with mature artists and teachers everywhere that the chief consideration for the artist, regardless of the tools or medium, must be the picture itself — and its quality as a picture. And, finally, I must repeat the last sentence of my introduction to this demonstration:

Only by the trial-and-error method have any painting facility, skill, and real understanding of a medium ever been achieved.

A variety of techniques

Courtesy Argosy Magazine

Bob Peak: This remarkably sensitive characterization was painted in an interesting way. After making a brush drawing of the figure on a rough-surfaced paper, Bob Peak had it enlarged as a photostat. Working directly on this with brush and opaque, he first laid in the head as a simple dark mass, then painted in the strong light tones. The enlarged photostat emphasizes the surface of the paper and adds a rich texture.

Courtesy M. H. De Young Memorial Museum

Dong Kingman: Here is a fine example of Dong Kingman's water-color technique. He painted this picture on rough water-color paper, using large round sable brushes for areas like sky and mountains, smaller sables for details like the tree branches. The artist created the clouds by blotting the wet wash in the sky with a wad of facial tissue. The tissue absorbs the wash instantly and leaves the white paper showing through. As in ordinary wash drawing, the lightest tones are the white of the paper.

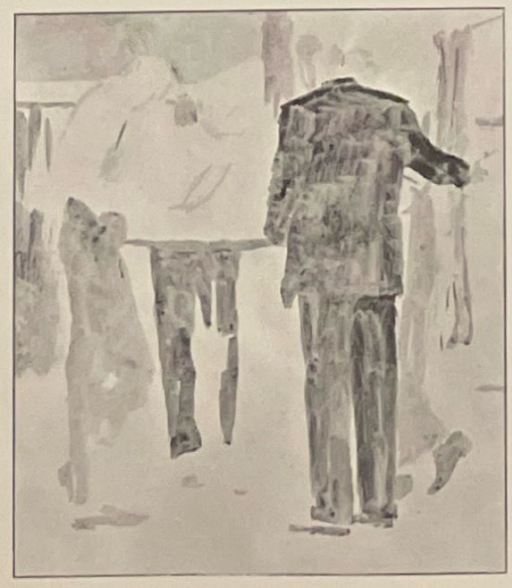
Courtesy University of Florida Press

Fletcher Martin: Both palette knife and bristle brushes were used by Fletcher Martin in painting this picture in oil on canvas. The surface texture of larger areas or shapes such as the background was made richer by scumbling several tones of paint one over the other with a palette knife.

Austin Briggs: This drawing is a combination of mediums. The tones on the clothing, flesh, and hair were put in with pastel, the lines were made with a carbon drawing stick.

Copyright Triangle Publications, Inc.; reprinted from TV Guide

The carbon stick drawing.



The wash tones.

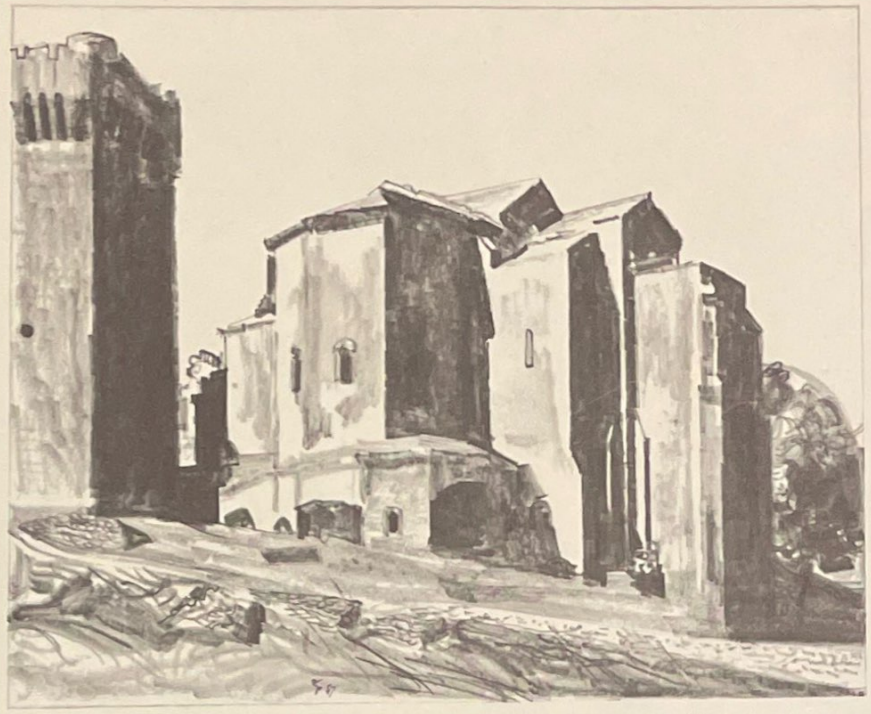
Austin Briggs: This drawing by Austin Briggs was made and printed in two parts — line and tone. First Briggs made the line drawing with a carbon drawing stick on water-color paper. Then he put this drawing over his light box, a glass-topped illuminated box, and placed another sheet of water-color paper over the drawing. The light box made the lines show through on the second sheet. On this he brushed in the tones with lampblack wash. A line engraving was made for the line drawing and a halftone engraving for the wash drawing, and the picture was printed from both. Making the drawing this way enabled Briggs to keep the solid black lines which would have been much weaker if reproduced by halftone.

Robert Fawcett: The felt-nib pen, with which this drawing was made, is a highly useful tool. The varying tone of the line is controlled by pressure on the nib. The width of the line is changed by turning the pen to use either the edge or flat side of the wedge-shaped nib.

Courtesy Container Corporation of America

Jan Balet: This delicate, imaginative picture was painted by Jan Balet, on illustration board with tempera. The texture of the ground was created by drawing directly over the tempera (when dry) with a black Wolff pencil.

Robert Fawcett: This simple but highly effective picture was drawn in ink wash on smooth-surfaced (hot-pressed) illustration board. The lines were put in with a small sable.



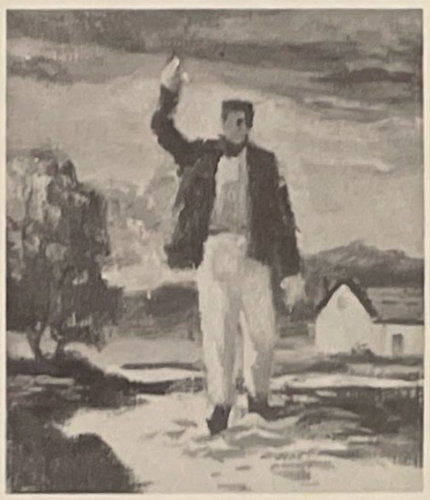
Robert Fawcett: Here is another felt-pen drawing by Robert Fawcett. The black shadows were put in with a wet nib and good pressure. The lighter tones and strokes were done with a lighter touch and drier nib.

Courtesy Cosmopolitan Magazine

Bob Peak: Blotter paper was the surface on which Bob Peak made this picture. He drew his lines in with a brush, varying the pressure to create interest and variety in the line itself. Instead of using a smooth wash in the background, the artist painted it in with bold, direct brush strokes that create an atmosphere of drama and excitement appropriate to the subject.

Although the sketch above contains many figures and much action, it is held together by a well-organized tonal pattern. If this complicated sketch had been started without first establishing the main areas of light and dark, the picture pattern would be weak and confusing. The diagram at the right shows you the basic arrangement of shapes and values underlying the details of the sketch.

Things to remember about tonal painting



Do keep the tones in your picture clear and organized so that all the elements are easily recognizable.

Don't lose sight of the basic tones and break up the pattern by overmodeling or overworking details.

Do establish a center of interest or give the elements in your composition an order of importance.

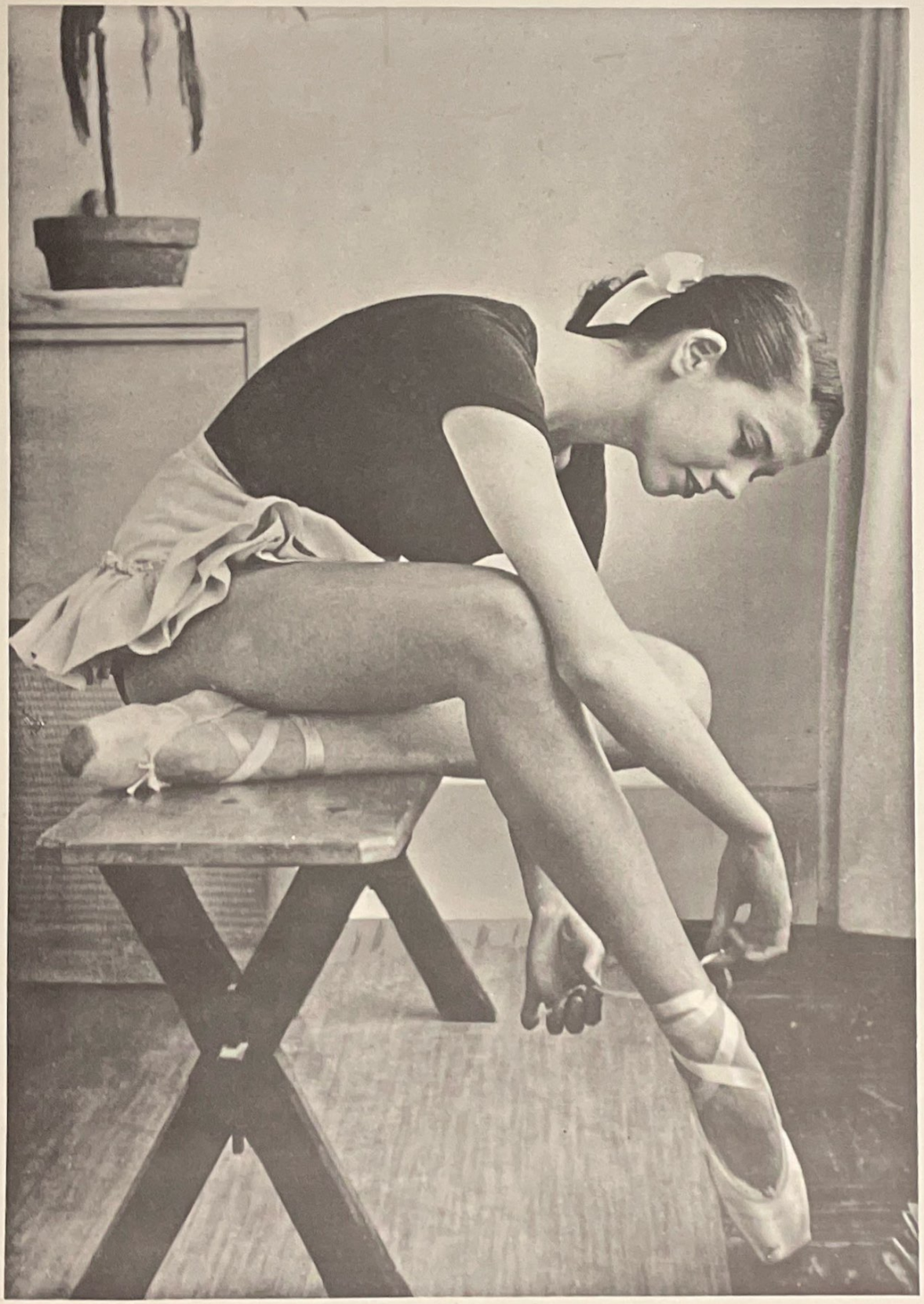
Don't make a number of things equally important. Here elements compete and the eye jumps around the picture.

Do establish a good contrast of value between your important elements and their background so the picture will tell your story clearly.

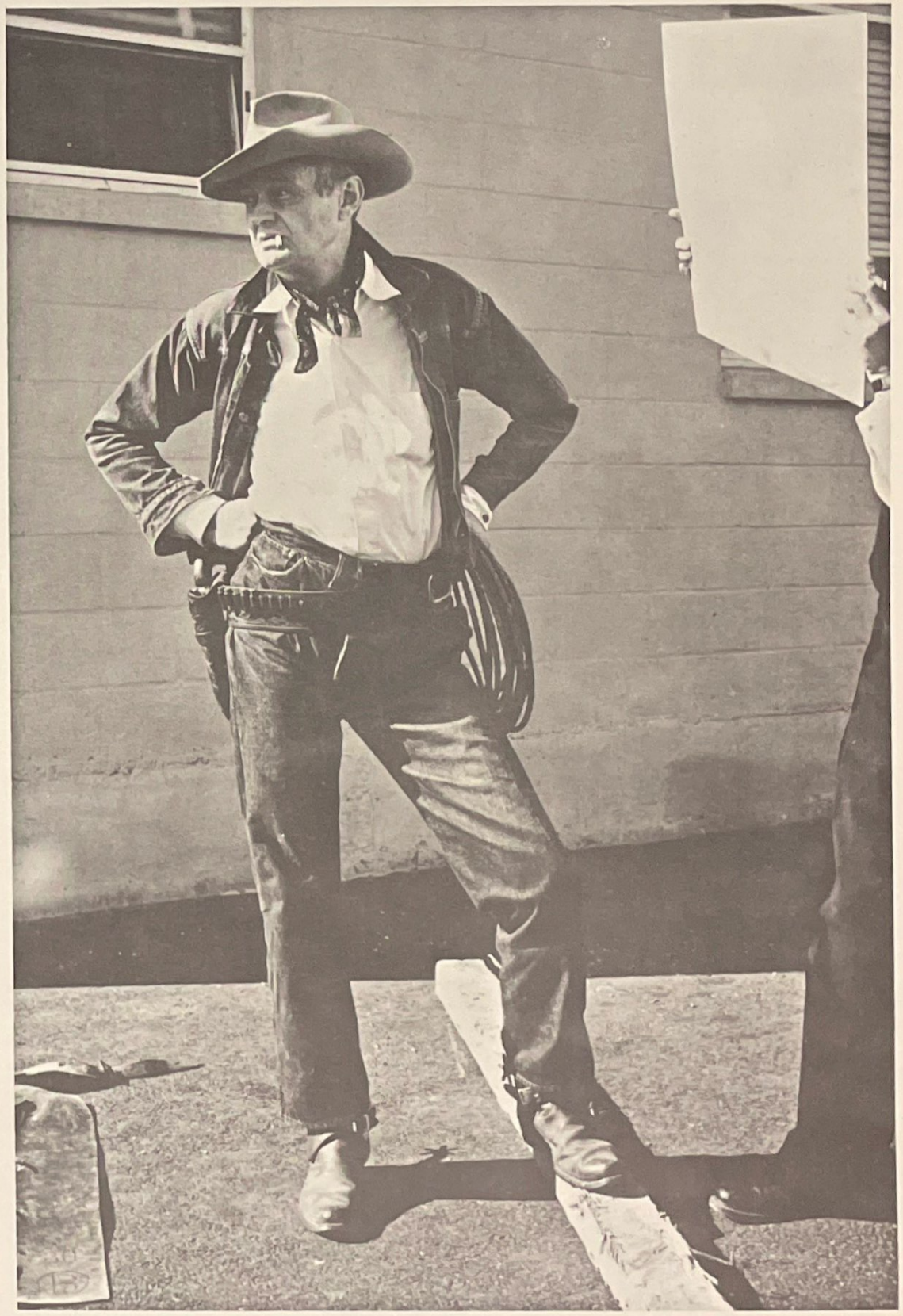
Don't confuse the things which are important to your picture idea by putting them against complicated or camouflaging backgrounds.

The choice of the model, the equipment and the lighting were carefully considered in respect to the requirements of the assignment. This is the kind of reference and information essential to the development of a successful drawing. Use the photo for information; simplify, edit, redesign as necessary. Do not trace it.

This photograph is the kind you should use for your background information. You may either use it or supply your own reference material for the background. Rearrange and edit to suit the purposes of your design.



A



B

FAMOUS ARTISTS COURSE
Student work
Lesson 15
Advanced line drawing and tonal painting

HOW TO PRACTICE AND PREPARE FOR THIS LESSON

This lesson introduces you to many different line and halftone techniques which can add freshness and originality to your pictures. There's no limit to the creative and exciting things you can do with today's wide variety of tools and materials. At the same time, never forget that these techniques will be really effective only if you combine them with sound drawing and composition.

Before you begin your practice work for this lesson, go back and review the techniques of handling the basic mediums in Lesson 1, then follow these study and practice suggestions in order to get the most from this lesson.

1. Choose your own subject and make a series of experimental line drawings which run the wide range of tools and techniques you see in the drawings on pages 6 through 15.

2. Make many pen and brush drawings from nature and photos from your scrap file. This practice of working directly in line is most valuable in helping you gain confidence -- an essential for the artist who works in line.

3. In addition to your work in wash and opaque, try out some of the other tonal mediums such as casein or colored ink. The demonstration in casein by Ben Stahl and the one in colored ink by Albert Dorne will guide you in using these mediums.

4. Whatever tonal medium you choose, be sure you understand the points made on pages 26 and 27 about local color and light and shade -- controlling edges, on pages 28 and 29 -- and the importance of establishing an over-all pattern as shown by Peter Helck on pages 30 and 31.

5. Work directly from nature or reference file photos in any tonal medium you wish. In some of your drawings, concentrate on using local color values to create tonal pattern. In others, let the light and shadow pattern dominate. In all of your practice, be especially careful in your control of values, no matter what medium you use.

THE ASSIGNMENTS YOU ARE TO SEND IN FOR CRITICISM

ASSIGNMENT 1. Using the photographs of the fisherman and stream on Plate 1 as reference, make a drawing in any line technique you wish. Think of this drawing as a spot illustration for an advertisement promoting a vacation resort and fishing area. The figure should dominate the scene and be in the same pose and position as in the photo. You may supply your own reference for the background if you prefer, instead of using the photo on Plate 1. This drawing should be designed into a vignette about 7 inches wide on an 11 x 14-inch sheet of drawing paper or illustration board.

Mark this drawing -- ASSIGNMENT 1.

ASSIGNMENT 2. Using the same photographs of the fisherman and background, render the same scene in wash or opaque. This painting should be the same size as your line drawing and also designed into a vignette. Do this on an illustration board measuring 11 x 14 inches.

Mark this piece -- ASSIGNMENT 2.

ASSIGNMENT 3. Do ONE of the following pictures in any line technique or in any tonal medium you wish. Do not use color.

3A. A vignetted illustration based on the photograph of the girl in ballet costume on Plate 2. This picture is to appear in a sophisticated woman's magazine. Remember, this is a feminine subject -- treat it accordingly. Feel free to depart from the photograph to increase the elegance. Background props based on material in your own reference file may be used if you wish. The rendering should measure approximately 9 inches high by 7 inches wide on a piece of 11 x 14-inch paper or board.

Mark this drawing -- ASSIGNMENT 3A.

3B. A picture with background to illustrate this passage from a story which is to appear in a man's magazine:

> The tall, lean cowboy was weary and hot. It had been a tough job. He turned and calmly surveyed his handiwork.

(over, please)

Your illustration should feature the cowboy and his feelings.

Use the posed photograph of the male model on Plate 2 as reference. The figure should dominate the picture, as shown in the art director's layout at the right. Use your own reference for the background. Make sure the scenery indicates the southwestern part of the U. S.

Make your picture 12 inches high by 8 inches wide on an 11 x 14-inch illustration board or heavy paper.

Mark this drawing -- ASSIGNMENT 3B.

In judging your assignments for this lesson, we will be chiefly interested in seeing:

--How creatively and effectively you have handled your tools and mediums.
--The soundness of the basic drawing and composition of your pictures.

Check before mailing

IMPORTANT: Be sure to letter your name, address, and student number neatly at the lower left-hand corner of each assignment. In the lower right corner, place the lesson number and assignment number.

Your lesson carton should contain:

Assignment 1
Assignment 2
Assignment 3A or 3B
1 Return shipping label filled out completely

Mail this carton to:
FAMOUS ARTISTS COURSE, WESTPORT, CONN.